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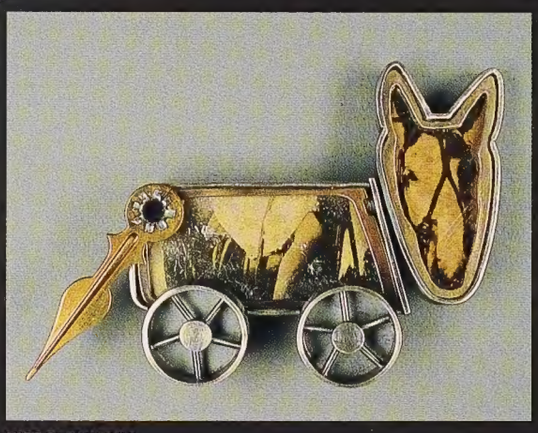

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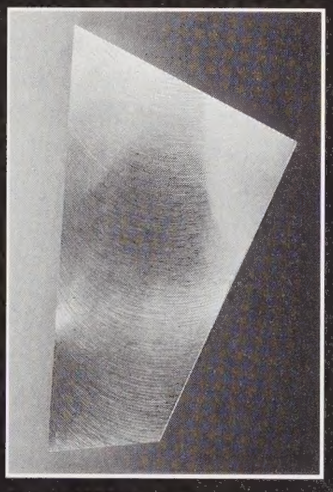

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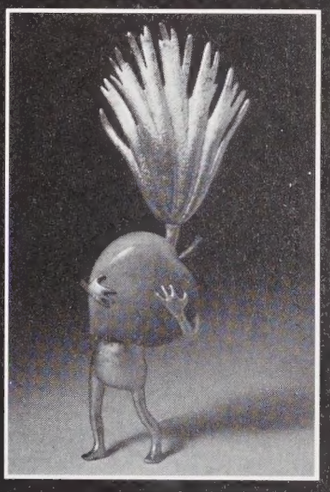

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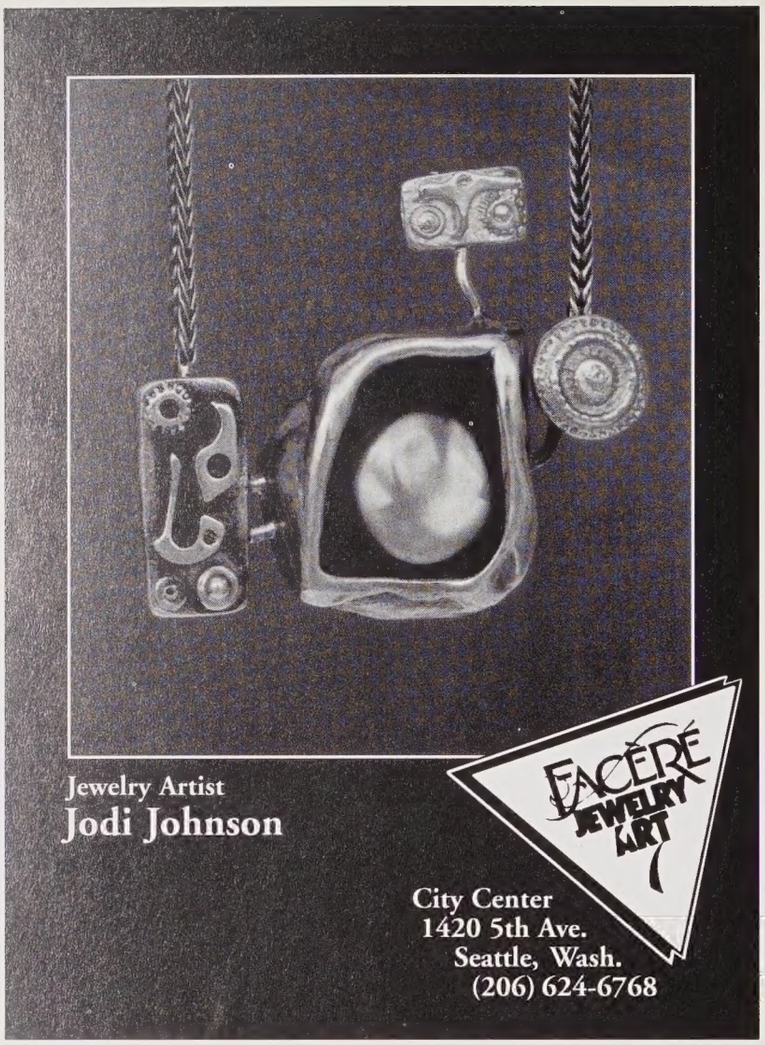

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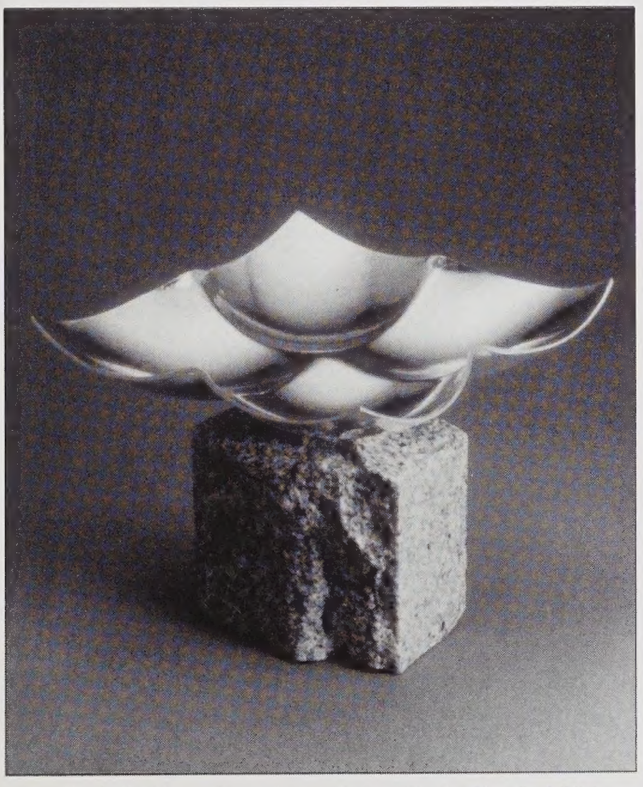

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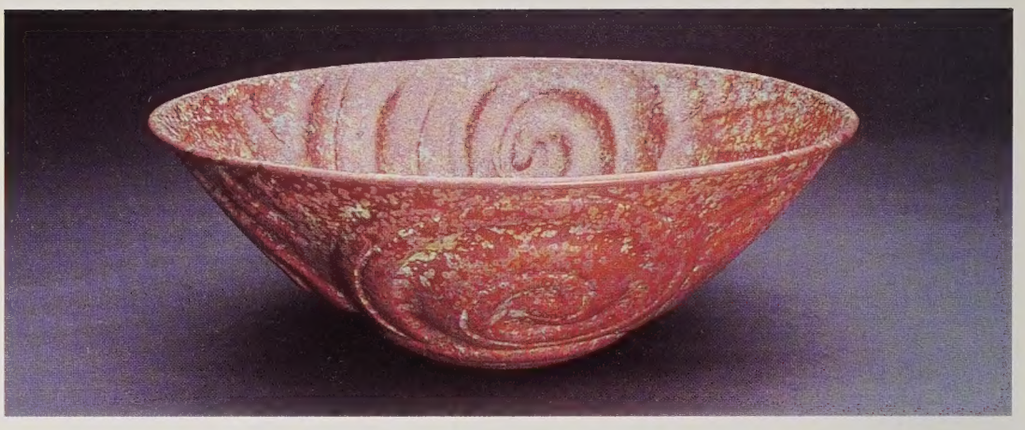

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Editorial

On hearing about the precise and labor intensive construction of a piece of metalwork I admire, I frequently accuse some of my metalsmithing friends of having too much time on their hands. Of course that accusation is meant to be ironic as I realize that time is something that metalsmiths never have in abundance. The crafts in general, but I sincerely believe this craft in particular, demand an enormous investment of time; a commitment that not only includes years of training and practice but a daily and ongoing commitment to the time required for the perfect resolution of a work. One of the rewards of such stamina is the resultant object, an object that is fully and totally controlled by its maker. While metalsmiths must meet the deadlines of galleries, exhibitions, wholesalers, and patrons, they are ultimately responsible for their work. Even more production-oriented jewelers are still able to examine the sub-contracted product for excellence before they allow it to go out under their name.

Unfortunately things are radically different in the world of publishing. The production of *Metalsmith* involves a number of people separated by significant geographical distance, and under the pressures of an inflexible schedule. Throughout the production cycle copies of the magazine at various stages are checked, corrected, copied, faxed, e-mailed, recopied, and checked, and corrected again. At a certain point the entire production team must arrest this process and commit to the press. Imagine – designing a piece, creating and correcting a prototype, correcting that prototype, possibly a number of times, and finally sending it off, with corrections to be made, to be produced. Further imagine seeing the final product in a case at a gallery or a vitrine at an exhibition at the same time that the public sees it.

Such is the experience of the production team of this magazine five times a year. Unfortunately, despite our best and most concentrated efforts and teamwork, mistakes still find their way into a publication. Every time this happens we review the stages of production, check the paper trail of our communication and corrections, and try to fine tune our procedures to prevent such mistakes in the future. It is a ceaseless process.

The last Summer issue of *Metalsmith* seems to have been retribution from the gods for some sin the production team must have committed. A series of mistakes and unavoidable last minute changes, compounded by the UPS strike, culminated in a book review and an exhibition review mutating onto a single page. We apologize profusely for this error and in this issue we are printing both reviews as they should have originally appeared. We regret the confusion, consternation, inconvenience, and frustration created by this mix-up, on the parts of our readers, invested galleries, the writer of both pieces, and most importantly, the artists who were impacted.

FCL

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amy: when Matt proposed, he hid the ring in the petals of a dozen long stem roses
allison: Jason hid mine in a piece of apple Pie his mom baked
from an old family recipe
jen: really, how sweet... Sean found mine in the pages of some design magazine,
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you know, not exactly the kinD of thing you'd want to hide in a pie...

jen: Allison... Allison, are you still there?

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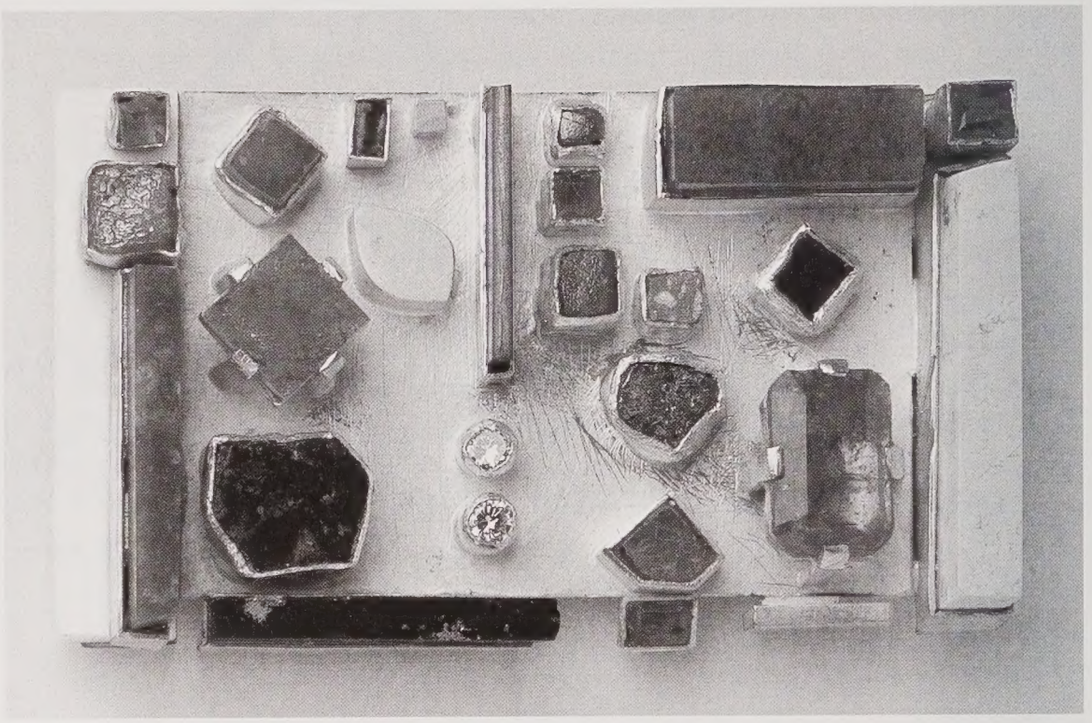
Book Review



Hermann Jünger
Pöring, (brooch), 1994
gold, yellow opal,
brilliant and rough cut diamond, emerald

Uber den Schmuck und das Machen
(About Jewelry and the Art of Making Things)
By Hermann Jünger
Anabas-Verlag, Frankfurt, 1996
142 pp.
In German and English

by Marjorie Simon

A kind of grace hovers over the latest book by Hermann Jünger, a paean to *making*, and a call to arms to hold fast to the meaning in making and even to acknowledge "...making as the basis for human existence, transcending separating barriers...." Together the drawings, photographs, and essays conspire to remind us that without the meaning imbued by the intrinsic value of handwork and a real body to bear them, our creations are as soulless as computer-generated designs.

Although readers will feast on images of assertive chunks of garnet and lapis lazuli elbowing for space on squares of gold, they should heed the text as well. With references ranging from the historic (Theophilus) to the literary (B. Traven, *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*), the essays devolve around levels of meaning in the concept of *work*. Not overlooked is the crucible of the German experience, from Goethe to Stefan Zweig, to the Nazi perversion of the work ethic, and Jünger's moving descriptions of his artistic coming-of-age in the literal rubble of post-war Germany. Under the guidance of his teacher and mentor Franz Rickert at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich, Jünger found encouragement for his suspicions that jewelry-making could be more than the technique so highly valued in Europe since the Renaissance.

Twenty-five pages of text and black and white photos precede the first color plate, a muted grey and black brooch, that comes as a fat circle after a forest of verticals in close-ups of the tools of our trade: files, pencils, paint brushes, nails, and saw blades. Drawings, watercolor wash sketches, and renderings, the lively chaos of sketchbook pages familiar to readers of Jünger's earlier catalogues alternate with lush actual-sized photographs, one or two images per page.

The jewelry pictured was made after 1989 and reveals the aesthetic concerns – "simple forms, in sequence and alignment, or the rich, detailed concentration within a small format" – that have characterized Jünger's work for over 30 years. His own essay highlights his intellectual underpinnings while pointing up the limitations of the book format itself, that is, "Jewellery only comes to life when worn, makes its impact as the body moves...." As proof, a couple of fluid necklaces shown on models provide an elegant counterpoint to the intimate brooches. Jünger's comments, written in his own calligraphic hand, thankfully include the story behind a pair of enameled brooches that began with his granddaughter playing in his studio.

At the end of his life, Sigmund Freud was asked what he thought a normal person ought to be able to do well. "*Lieben und arbeiten*" (to love and to work) is said to have been his terse reply. From the opening images of familiar tools to the tender closing shots of Jünger folded into a chair reading with his grandchild, Jünger at work, and closing with an exuberant back-lit shot of the artist's wife Jo, this *more-than-catalogue* documents an artist's love affair with process and indeed, a celebration of head, heart, and hands.

Uber des Schmuck und das Machen is available in the United States through Jewelerswerk Galerie, Washington, DC.

Marjorie Simon is a metalsmith and frequent contributor to this magazine. She resides in Highland Park, New Jersey.

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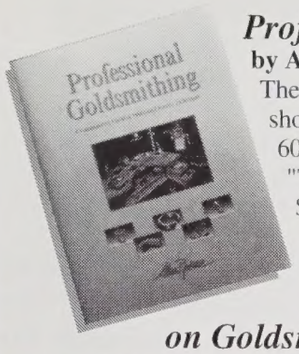

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From the Bench

Peter J. Joseph

Scrap and Immortality

In the city where I grew up – Chicago – the ghettos were literally crumbling. My house had a fireplace and my brother, sister, and I would take a wagon into the ghetto to collect firewood. Along with the wood I'd usually scavenge old cast iron heating grates, door hardware, fireplace parts, finials, and sometimes radiators. To this day it's difficult for me to describe the delightful feeling of getting something for free, of cheating the idea of decay and destruction, of extending the life of *stuff*.

There is an image that I can't get out of my head. A man stands at the bottom of a big pile of scrap aluminum. He's got a torch in his hand, sometimes a cigarette. He's torch cutting pieces of aluminum and throwing them into a bin. After every three or four cuts he sits down with his cigarette and stares out into the desert. The aluminum pile is maybe thirty or forty feet high.

I think of Sisyphus, doomed to push a boulder uphill that always rolls back down. There's no way the torch cutter's task will ever be complete, the pile he works at continues to grow. There was a torch cutter here before this man and there will be another long after he's gone.

After hanging around scrap yards most of my life, it's become clear how they sing with immortality. As Sisyphus cuts aluminum, I sit on a scrapped-out casket. Bodies die. But this pile – some of it's been here for two generations, and it's anybody's guess how far into the future it will exist. One could come here years from now and still find the same pieces. Why do we collect such stuff? Why is the silence in these places rife with so many echoes?

All around me is the past.

I seek a connection to the past, partly because the future has encroached too fast and partly because it comforts me to know the past exists in scrap yards, river fronts, abandoned factories, and vacant lots used as dumps. I used to scrap solely with an appetite for what I would find. My ultimate goal was to discover the treasure amidst the chaos. On my more recent expeditions I find I surrender to a pure, simple contentment. I am happy to be among so many benign and useful ghosts of an extinct industrial past.

There are still certain things I look for at the yards – nuts, bolts, all thread, electric motors, hydraulic parts, bar stock, springs, sheet and plate, valves, and tools. And there have been some occasions when I heard the object calling, paid attention to its voice and then sought it out and bought it.

Yet the items I treasure the most have been unexpected finds with no apparent value or use. These things sit in my yard and around the shop and echo with more sculptural value than what any artist can make.

Some forms are reminiscent of ancient cultures: rural midwestern or African, Milltown industrial or Prehistoric Chinese. What's the connection? A thread that has been woven through culture and history somehow passes through this pile and often ends up spliced into my own backyard.

I have my own pile of scrap – so do most of my working associates. We often know what each other has, although a careful inventory is no more than wishful thinking. We all have our pile of immortality that, unless we sell it will be there forever to serve us and our friends. I know that if I ever need metal frame single pane windows, they will be in Jim's scrap pile. Could my relationships with some people be cemented into the future by knowing what they have in their scrap piles? I could call them in about twenty years and chances are that the objects that I seek will still be there.

I don't want to live forever, but I have a healthy fear of dying. The scrap continuum eases my fear. It's a way to transcend time, style, era, economy, and place. The obsolete quality of mass consumables we buy today just doesn't soothe as well or as richly.

While there is money to be made from aluminum cans, radiators, and batteries, nobody in this anthill of profit seeking pays much attention to the rocket nozzles, jail cells, cast iron fittings, hydraulic cylinders, compressors, and antique car parts.

Ask a yard owner why he doesn't get rid of it all just to clean things up. Not wanting to admit that he finds comfort just knowing it's out there, chances are he'll say that it may be worth something someday.

I did meet a recycler in Kansas who, with a yard of scrap as far as the eye could see, showed no embarrassment regarding his desire to hold onto the stuff. I could look and shop around, but when it came time to talk price – just the idea that I was interested in this or that piece of his future seemed to set him against selling any of it. Are scrappers not unlike the Egyptian pharaohs, preparing and collecting for life everlasting? Or is the future so uncertain that some simply hold on to an era when *forever* was conceivable?

When I die, my pile of treasure will go to someone who will be able to relate to and appreciate it. I'll be content knowing that the stuff will outlast me. When I come upon a scrap yard and walk and climb around and reflect, I'm filled with hope: the hope of usefulness, of endurance, of the future, and of the promise of immortality.

Peter J. Joseph is a writer and artist living in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

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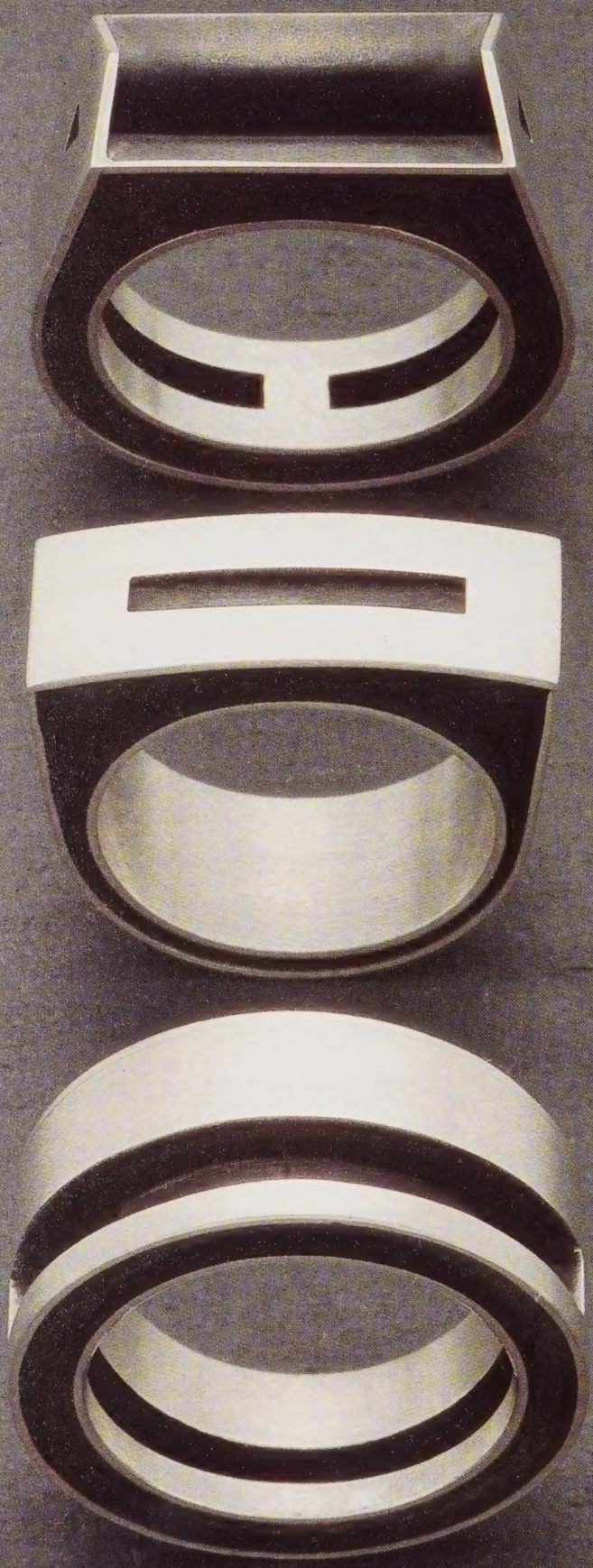


***Hollow Ring Series*, 1993**
sterling

Ken Vickerson Mind and Matter

Text by Barbara Isherwood

Left
Ring, 1995
palladium, tourmaline
Award of Excellence, Metal Arts Guild
50th Anniversary Show, 1996

Below
Ring, 1995
18k yellow gold, palladium,
black star sapphire
Award of Excellence, Metal Arts Guild
50th Anniversary Show, 1996

Ken Vickerson's jewellery is a study in balance. While respected as a consummate craftsman, a deep philosophical streak compels this artist to move beyond decoration into the realm of ideas.

Like many jewellers, Vickerson was introduced to metalsmithing by chance. Born in Edmonton, Alberta in 1958, he shared with his younger sister Laura[1] an early interest in art. As a teenager his talents were nurtured through photography and painting courses, including a summer session at the internationally renowned Banff Centre for the Arts. Wanting to pursue a career in the fine arts, in 1978 Vickerson enrolled in the Alberta College of Art[2] in Calgary.

Vickerson's first thought was to pursue commercial art, but he soon discovered it was not for him. (It's hard to imagine this independent-minded artist devoting his creative talents to someone else's agenda.) He investigated printmaking, sculpture, and, as an aside, jewellery, which was well represented at ACA through their Jewellery Diploma program.

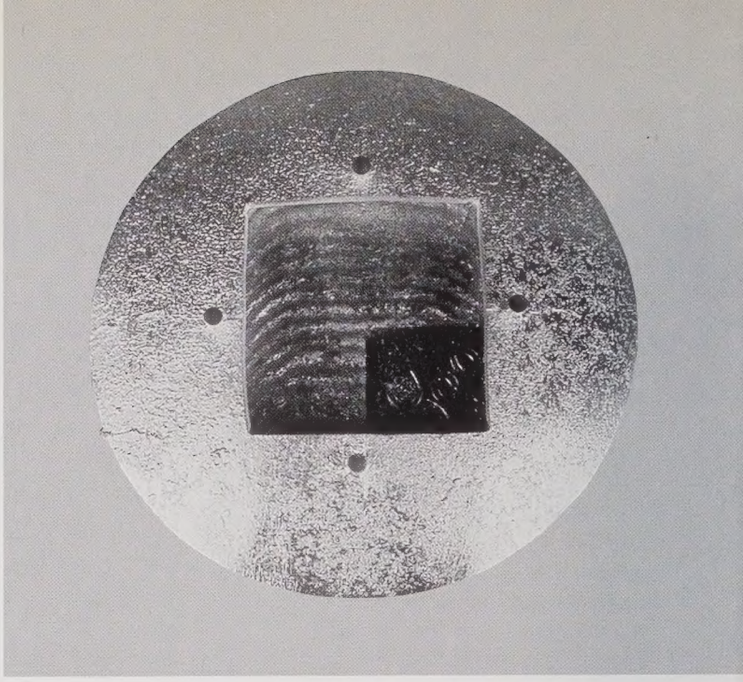
He rejected printmaking; Vickerson has always preferred to focus on unique pieces. Sculpture intrigued him and to this day it is an aspect of his artistic output. It was jewellery that had a significant impact on the artist. Metalsmithing had the right mix of conceptual and technical elements, and the instructors who influenced him most, Jim Robson and Wayne MacKenzie, pushed the young artist to excel both technically and intellectually.

The balance of mind and matter that originally attracted Vickerson to jewellery has remained in his work since his college days. Reflecting on his work over the past fifteen years the artist comments, "It tends to be a bit eclectic, because I get interested in an idea or technique, then I'll pursue it, and then I'll shift lanes. But if you see it over a long period of time, then you can put it all in context. It has a basis in architecture, structure, concept, and technique."[3]

The combination of these four elements is illustrated in a ring created for *Bijoux du Canadienes*, a 1995 exhibition of works by Canadian goldsmiths at Galerie Aurus in Paris, France. A tribute to the Eiffel Tower, the ring features a teal blue emerald cut tourmaline raised in a palladium setting that recalls the pioneering nineteenth century structure. In characteristic Vickerson style, extraneous elements and excessive surface detail have been eschewed in favour of form and design. Fabrication is Vickerson's forte (although he teaches casting, he rarely uses it in his own work) and the impeccable craftsmanship of this ring and its companion, in 18k yellow gold and palladium with a black star sapphire, won Vickerson the J and D Diamond Award of Excellence at the Metal Arts Guild's 50th Anniversary Juried Exhibition.

The acknowledgment of Paris's signature monument was not just occasioned by the exhibition. "There's an unwritten bond between jewellery and architecture," explains the artist, whose work frequently carries visual and structural allusions to buildings and bridges. The fact that many of his clients are architects strengthens the relationship between his structural aesthetic and that profession's focus on elements of plane, line, and space.

As in architecture, the formal concerns in Vickerson's pieces are purposeful. A ring from 1989, in 14k, sterling, nickel, steel, and shakudo, was inspired by the multicultural character of Toronto, where Vickerson has lived since 1985. Stripes of the different coloured metals and gold lattice work form a tiered band of restrained elegance that belies the complexity of its construction. Surmounting this modernist framework is a panel of laminated mosaic that has a decorative, Middle Eastern flavour. Another Metal Arts Guild Award of Excellence winner, the ring unites two contrasting aspects of Canada's largest city in a harmonious marriage of contemporary line and old world pattern.



Right
Tableau III/Oysters Lie Dreaming, 1996
sterling, gold leaf

This ring was the culmination of an extensive body of work using lamination techniques. "I tend to work in series because of the difficulty of putting complex ideas into small works," says Vickerson. The catalyst for a new group of works may be an intriguing material or untried process. These physical elements are then *wrapped around* notions to create jewellery in which technique and concept nurture and complement each other.

That his chosen medium should be a vehicle for the expression of ideas is at the centre of Vickerson's philosophy of jewellery. "I think what people working in this medium really have to consider is how to give the objects that they make meaning," says the artist. The symbiotic relationship between materials and concepts that propels his work is reflected in the genesis of another ring for the Paris show. "I came home one afternoon and my wife was cooking stew. I was stirring it and there were three beautiful bones in it, so I pulled them out and starting cutting them up, and made a stone for a ring. The idea behind it was the meeting of two cultures, specifically the Innu and NATO forces that practise in Labrador[4] – half the ring had an aircraftlike structure, the other was this pristine bone."

Creating the *bone-stone* was a laborious process that necessitated gluing a number of small pieces of bone together in order to make one piece large enough to be turned on a lathe. Vickerson views the challenges presented by unorthodox or hard-to-handle materials as opportunities to stretch himself technically. "It's not so much the final product, it's the process, the journey, what I learn along the way."

Vickerson's use of difficult materials or techniques is never an exercise in technical virtuosity for its own sake. For the *Eiffel Tower* ring, Vickerson chose palladium, a stubborn metal that is hard to drill, cut, and solder, because he wanted the subtle colour that could be achieved through patination. His efforts resulted in a cool grey surface that successfully elicits associations with industry, engineering, and modernism, appropriate to this ring's iconic inspiration.

In another ring, created in 1991, palladium was heated-treated to produce a remarkable patina that resembles mottled stone. This distinctive surface, coupled with the rich tone of a green tourmaline, balances the ring's hefty structure and highly ordered symmetry, producing the canny equilibrium that makes viewing Vickerson's work such a satisfying experience.

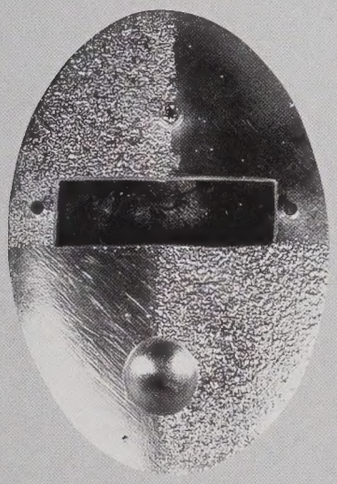
The unusual patina, initially achieved serendipitously, was consciously developed by Vickerson after he saw the intriguing results. He cites the discovery as a prime example of why jewellers should push their technical skills and knowledge to the limit. "There are so many things that happen in technique that influence the concept. People who ignore the technical aspects do so at their own peril. They limit their range of expression."

In keeping with this view, Vickerson's quest for artistic and technical growth has remained constant. Over the years he has taken workshops in most aspects of jewellery design and construction, from hollowware and Japanese alloys to lamination and plastics. He has pursued in depth the creation and development of alternative settings that allow him to set the stones himself, thus giving him more control over the design. In addition to learning a number of settings from Whitney Boin, Vickerson has added to this repertoire by reworking traditional designs, adapting ideas from other forms such as a muffler clamp and an eye socket, and mixing elements from various styles to create hybrid settings.

Vickerson employs these innovative settings in rings, his favoured jewelry objects. The artist is attracted to the symbolism of the circle, and enjoys the opportunity to use stones, particularly odd-shaped cabochons or coloured diamonds. Speaking about a ring made for his wife, sculptor Colleen Brzezicki, his enthusiasm for the lore of stones is evident. In a gold band with a Celtic knot pattern, he set a transparent purple-blue iolite. Iolites were known as the "Viking compass" because allegedly, on overcast days, the Vikings could use an iolite to locate the sun. Although Vickerson was not able to substantiate this legend, he was so fascinated by the story that he cut a Greek cross into the bottom of the setting, to symbolize the four points of the compass.

In addition to themes from history and politics, memories and personal experiences also generate ideas for pieces. One of Vickerson's favourite early works is his 1985 *Funerary Urn for a Cat*, in steel, brass, zebra wood, and bronze cat whiskers. The object is a functioning urn he describes as "a tribute to a faithful friend." A group of brooches from 1994 that commemorate the joys and terrors of home renovations was motivated by Vickerson's own adventures revitalizing his old east-end Toronto house.

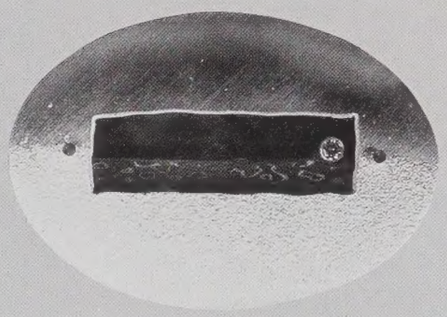
Both seen and imagined landscapes resurface as tiny vistas that straddle the borders of abstraction and representation. In *Totem Brooch*, 1991, Vickerson employed marriage of metals, mokumé gané, lamination, and a coloured diamond to create an image of a towering form rising above a barren red plane. The enigmatic object has a mummylike appearance, suggested by bandagelike striations and a slight roundness at the top that hints at a head. It also recalls the Hoodoo rock formations in Vickerson's native Alberta. The cryptic imagery and formidable technical skill illustrated by this brooch invite repeated examination. It is his ability to engage the viewer/wearer that endows Vickerson's work with an enduring fascination.



Above
Tableau IV, 1996
sterling, nickel, gold leaf,
900 gold, diamond

Above, right
Tableau I, 1996
sterling, nickel, mokumé gané,
yellow diamond, 900 gold,
2 x 1½ x ½"

While works such as *Totem Brooch* have a narrative element that Vickerson views as analogous to drawing or painting, in other pieces the underlying concept is more abstract. In his *Hollow Ring* series from 1993 he explored the notion of intimate space. Appearing simple at first glance, the trio of sterling silver rings are, in fact, conceptually and technically complex. Air enters the hollow interior of each ring through one or two horizontal apertures cut into the exterior surface. The air touches the skin through apertures in the interior surface, activating an "intimate space" that exists between the ring and its wearer.



This group of rings was created during Vickerson's second sojourn in Germany, where he first visited in 1992, through an exchange program sponsored by the Ontario Crafts Council. Feeling that his first trip had not allowed him sufficient time to absorb what this world centre for contemporary jewellery had to offer, he went back the next year, courtesy of a grant from the Ontario Arts Council. During his second, extended visit he studied the working properties of 900 gold with master goldsmith Gunter Ketterer.

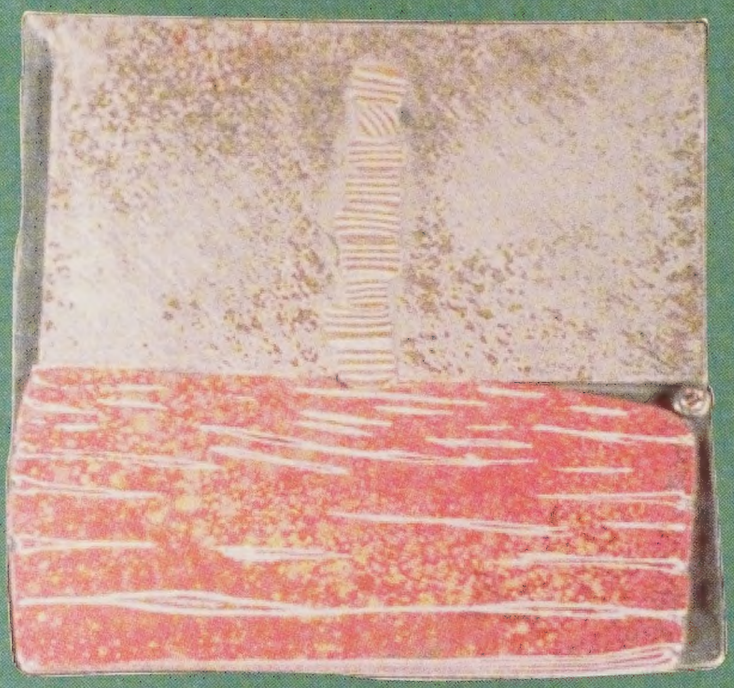
Vickerson returned to Canada envious of the conditions for jewellers in Germany, who benefit from a comprehensive educational system, a government that is committed to the arts, and a well-developed marketplace. In contrast, Canadian jewellers face a number of obstacles. Government support for the arts has been steadily dwindling. Schools offering full programs in jewellery are relatively few, and cannot be compared to German institutions, where, as Vickerson notes, one can spend fifteen years learning the art of goldsmithing. Add to this the general lack of sophistication that characterizes Canadian consumers, and it is not surprising that jewellers of Vickerson's stature are seeking outlets beyond Canada's borders.

What can be done to remedy this situation? Vickerson believes Canadian jewellers are both part of the problem, and part of the solution. "As craftsmen, we can start making work that is more significant. We don't have an edge on mass production, we have an edge on ideas. Why try to compete with stuff that's made in Taiwan? We can't. Where we can compete is in the idea and in imbuing these pieces with meaning."

Having learned these lessons through experience, Vickerson now concentrates on unique pieces and prefers to have one really good outlet for his work. Vickerson was represented by Montreal dealer Stella Chan, whose Galerie Suk Kwan was a showcase for many of Canada's finest metalsmiths.[5]

Cultivating additional sources of income has enabled the artist to avoid some of the pitfalls of the marketplace. Vickerson's reputation as an innovative artist with tremendous technical skill has enabled him to develop a large clientele. Vickerson relishes the private commissions. "It gives me the opportunity to make work that is significant. If you think about the sort of objects that people own that have meaning, they're pretty few. You can get along with about two percent of the objects we collect. Anything over and above that I think should have real significance, symbolically, to you."

Vickerson's missionary streak is put to good use through teaching. He is currently a full-time instructor at the Ontario College of Art and Design, teaches part-time at George Brown College, and also conducts workshops at schools across Canada. His role as mentor to the next generation of metalsmiths is one he finds mutually beneficial. "It shifts my perceptions, as I'm engaged in shifting theirs." Along with giving students a solid grounding in both the technical and conceptual aspects of metalsmithing, Vickerson also believes a part of his job is to raise awareness of the broader issues facing craftspeople. Teaching the public that there is a worthy alternative to a diamond ring purchased from a chain store in a mall is a task he feels his students must be prepared to undertake if the market for studio jewellery is to grow.



Totem Brooch, 1991
sterling, nickel, mokumé gané,
copper, colored diamond
2 x 2"

Crown Ring, 1996
18k yellow gold, palladium,
brown and pink diamonds

Ring, 1991
palladium, tourmaline

Ring, 1989
14k, sterling, nickel, steel, shakudo
Award of Excellence, Metal Arts Guild
Annual Juried Show, 1990

The ideas which nourish Vickerson's own expressive impulses are continually replenished through his voracious appetite for knowledge. His reading list reveals a keen interest in the forces that shape contemporary society. Technology's relationship to social structures, the current obsession with national debt and deficit, the specter of corporate domination, and the spread of democracy are just a few of the topics he has explored recently.

Such informal research will not necessarily result in specific pieces of jewellery. Rather, it is fuel for the creative fire, which is also stoked by colleagues, conversations, and current events. A brooch in his new *Tableaux* series was sparked by an encounter his wife had with a proselytiser, who appeared on their doorstep. The *true believer* was asserting the superiority of humankind over the rest of the animal kingdom, a point Brzezicki could not allow to go unchallenged. (The Vickerson/Brzezicki household includes an assortment of permanent and occasional four-legged residents.) The incident caused Vickerson to muse about whether or not animals think. *Tableau IV/Oysters Lie Dreaming* is his response. A square aperture in the centre of a circular sterling silver plane reveals a recessed panel on which slumbering oysters, delicately formed by tiny spirals of fused wire, lie beside a shimmering shore of undulating sand (cleverly suggested by a gold-leafed cuttlefish casting). While the brooch's regular contours and symmetrically placed rivets reflect Vickerson's predilection for precise geometry, the fused silver surfaces are grainy and indefinite, like the philosophical terrain he frequently mines.

In *Tableau II/The One True Toothpick*, a pair of gold-leafed toothpicks form a cross that is contained within a sterling silver oval. The brooch, which can also be worn as a pendant, pokes gentle fun at the powers invested in objects, an issue that has implications for jewellery. Vickerson appropriates the spiritual qualities of a reliquary and again plays with scale relationships and references to architecture.

Tableau IV, in sterling, nickel, gold leaf, 900 gold, and diamond, evokes a mood of desolation. A face shaped oval is pierced by a visorlike rectangle that reveals a pair of staring eyes. *Pupils* are indicated by two tiny barren trees, whose tortured limbs are made of twisted copper wire. The diamond in the forehead of the masklike visage suggests a third eye that gazes beyond the pain of this world into infinity.

The most serious piece to date is *Tableau V/Memento Mori*, a brooch/pendant of sterling, pearls, 900 gold, and diamond, created for an OCAD exhibition dedicated to the memory of the victims of the 1995 Montreal massacre.[6] A wide oval frame of fused sterling silver surrounds a recessed panel, on which lies a tiny skeleton, broken and crumbling like the remnants of an ancient grave exposed by the harsh winds of time. A tour de force in fused silver, the oxidized image is only readable upon close inspection – as Vickerson says, "It's not a biker brooch." The sombre theme is sensitively echoed by a dangling grey pearl.

The piece references Victorian mourning jewellery which, like the reliquary, is a historic form that served a function beyond decoration. Vickerson also acknowledges the influence of fellow Canadian Paul McClure, whose own *Memento Mori* series of oxidized sterling silver and pearl pendants is a contemporary contemplation on the theme of mortality. Like McClure's pendants, Vickerson's brooch is not a period-piece, nor is its condemnation of violence against women rooted in sensationalism. *Memento Mori* is a work of jewellery that carries its disturbing, urgent message into the arena of daily life.

The *Tableaux* series will continue until Vickerson has explored all of the technical and conceptual possibilities it offers. Then, something else will trigger his interest and another series will emerge. Perhaps the recently installed forge in his backyard studio will provide a point of departure for a journey into new frontiers. For this thinking person's jeweller, there are endless roads to explore.

Barbara Isherwood is a freelance writer on the visual arts who lives in Toronto.

Notes

[1] Like her brother, Laura maintained an interest in art, and is today a noted contemporary artist whose work has a strong conceptual slant.

[2] Now the Alberta College of Art and Design.

[3] All quotes are from conversations with the artist April 1, 1996 and February 1, 1997.

[4] He refers to military aircraft flying over northern habitats and disrupting Aboriginal lifestyles.

[5] Although Galerie Suk Kwan is now closed, Chan continues to represent jewellers privately and pursues opportunities for Canadian jewellers abroad. It was Chan who initiated *Bijoux du Canadienes* at Galerie Aurus in Paris.

[6] In which deranged gunman Marc Lepine killed thirteen female engineering students during a shooting rampage at Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique.

Heinz Brummel

Text by Sarah Stonich

Photographs
by Heinz Brummel

Upon entering his studio, anyone familiar with Heinz Brummel's work will recognize the playful geometry of the vignette making up the far wall. Three tall windows covered in bright canvas shades of red, yellow, and blue form primary rectangles; hung from the ceiling just in front of the windows are two round, post-modern chairs in wire and vinyl; and parked just beneath is a classic, low-slung, black BMW motorcycle, its circular blue and white logo curiously similar to Brummel's own designs. Brummel, bent over a work bench, intent and absorbed, lends the space an atmosphere redolent of a Viennese *werkstätte*, where one might find various craftspeople working on different projects, yet all reaching for the same grail of functional beauty.

Brummel's striking artistry in sterling and enamel is worn from London to Los Angeles. His pieces range from simple, single-element earrings to elaborately constructed multicomponent pieces. Many of Brummel's standard objects – typically brooches and pendants of cloisonné and semiprecious stones, begin as simple frameworks. Structural forms he has designed are like mannequins yet to be clothed. From these basic starting points Brummel crafts unique pieces. He might add a cloisonné face or create appendages of bezelled lapis, affix dangling cones of onyx, or sand-blast a portion of plain enamel to create a textured design. Some pieces have planes of colored laminate, a small working whirly-gig, or a slinky-like stretch of tightly coiled sterling. A simple pendant, a skeletal fish caught on a leather line, is comprised solely of sterling and caprice.

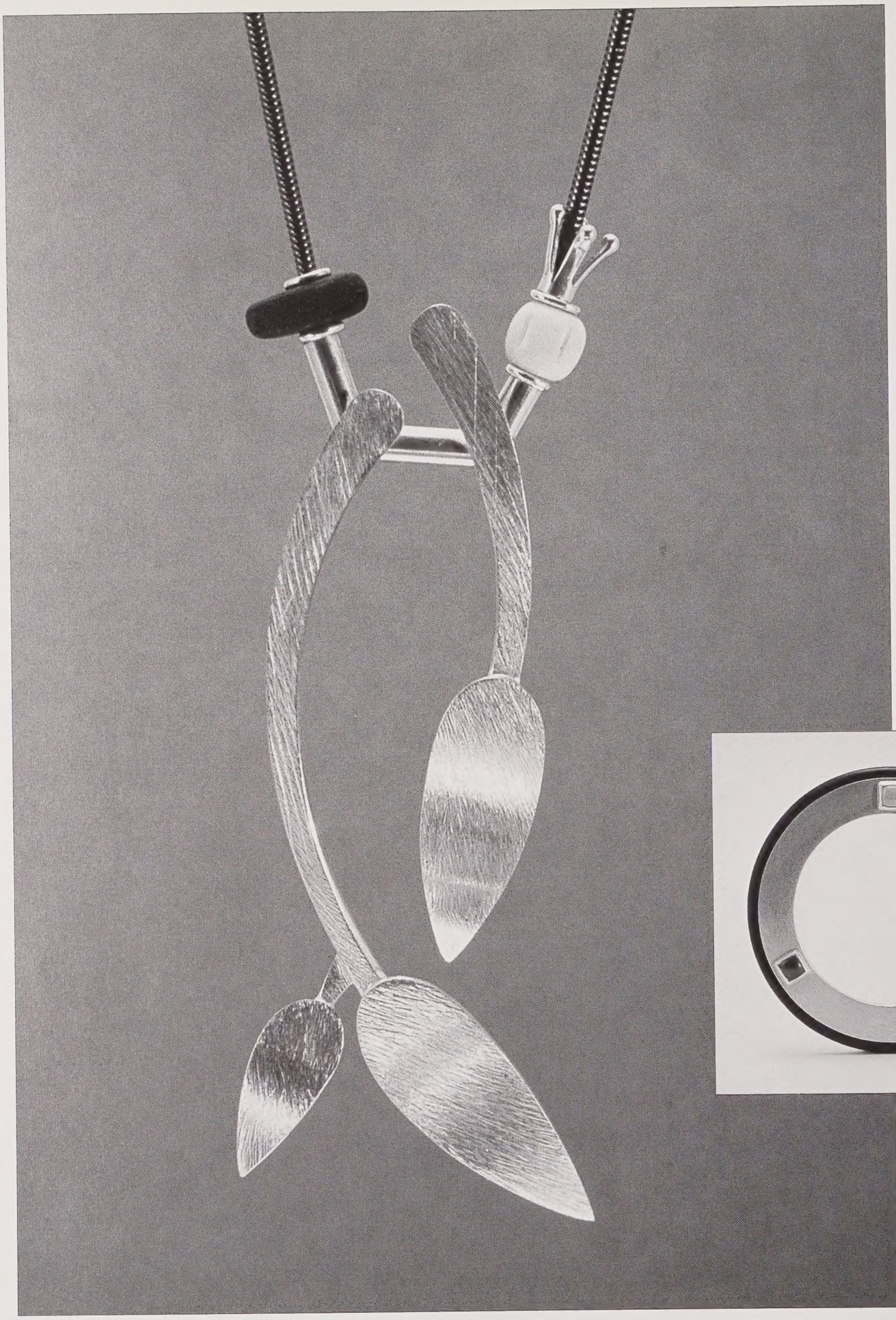
His missile like *projectile* brooches might feature any combination of bone, jade, enamel, or antique glass, poised and ready to blast off their settings of polished sterling. Brummel often integrates everyday objects into his designs; a pair of earrings resembling small cages house flea market marbles; a similar pendant holds an ordinary rubber stopper, no longer ordinary in its new environment.

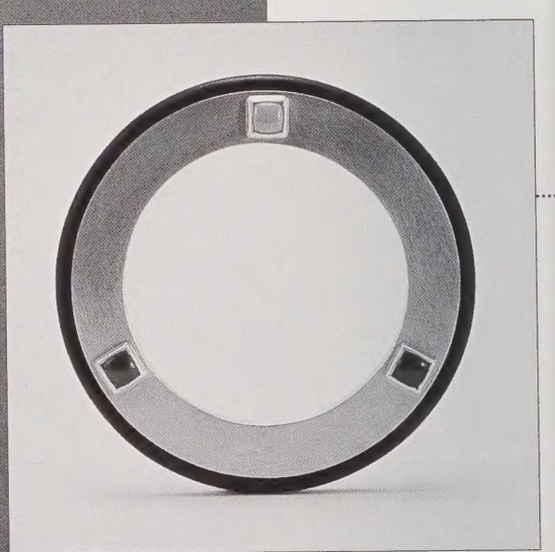
Unique museum pieces adorned with semiprecious stones and found objects have won Brummel recognition and awards across the country, but all of his works, from the simple to the complex, share the same seamless craftspersonship. The precision in Brummel's work is as outstanding an element as his trademark of primary-colored cloisonné.

The pieces which have been most satisfying for Brummel are a series he calls *Art and Science Handcuffs*. These mechanical bracelets are marvels of engineering in hand-sized scale. Simple in comparison to his elaborate pendants, the cuffs are frugally adorned with small bits of bezelled enamel and bands of black latex. They are his proudest achievement and deceptive in their simplicity. The clasp system slides together to encircle the wrist with a solid, ingenious snap. Compared to his early works the sheer design of these cuffs attests that Brummel's maturation, patience, and dogged quest for perfection have paid off.

Left
From *Bulb 2 Series*, (earrings)
sterling, lacquered wood

Above
From *Ami Cluster Series*, (pin)
sterling, sand blasted
enamel, antique bead, stainless steel





Left
From *Japanese Garden Series*, (pendant)
sterling on bone, snake chain

Left, inset
From *Crusader Cuff Series*
sterling, enamel, rubber

Below, inset
From *Art and Science Handcuff Series*
sterling, enamel, rubber, glass

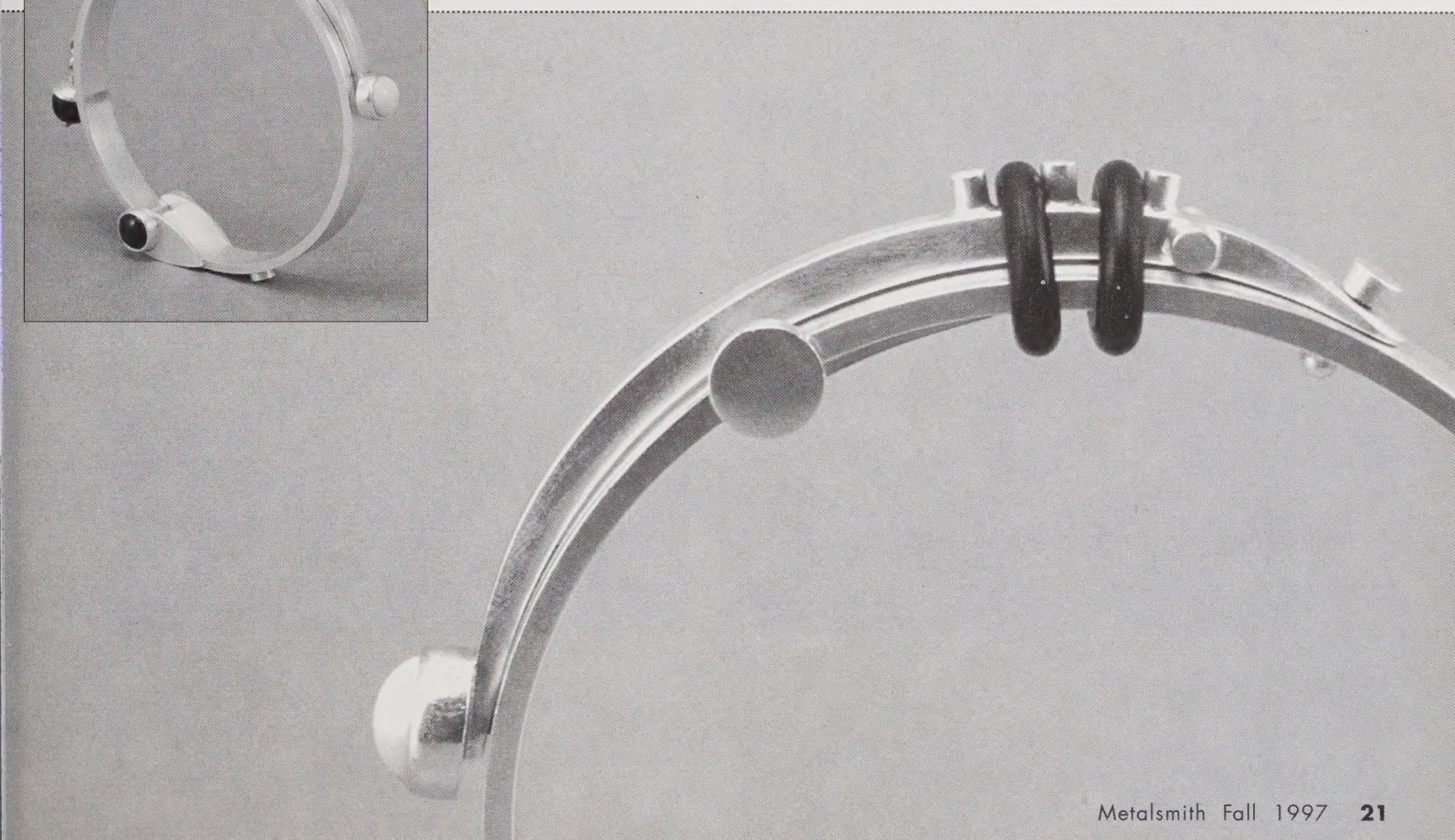
Below
From *Art and Science Handcuff Series*, (detail)
sterling, enamel, rubber, glass

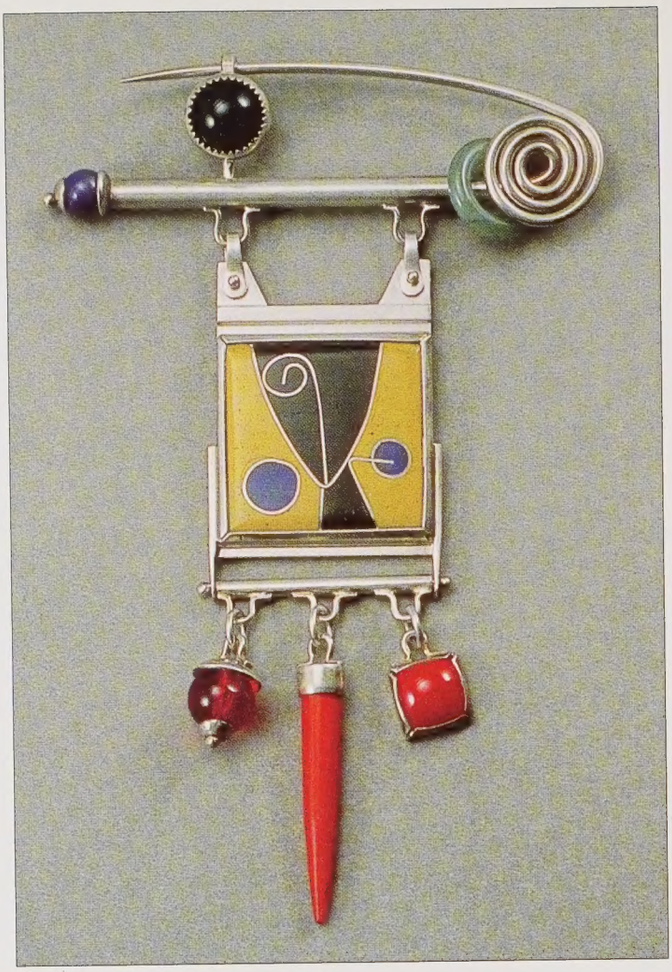
Brummel considers the attention to detail the core of his work – the molecular level which determines the overall make-up. The micro should reflect the macro. "Seeing *how* something is made is as important as seeing the object *itself*."

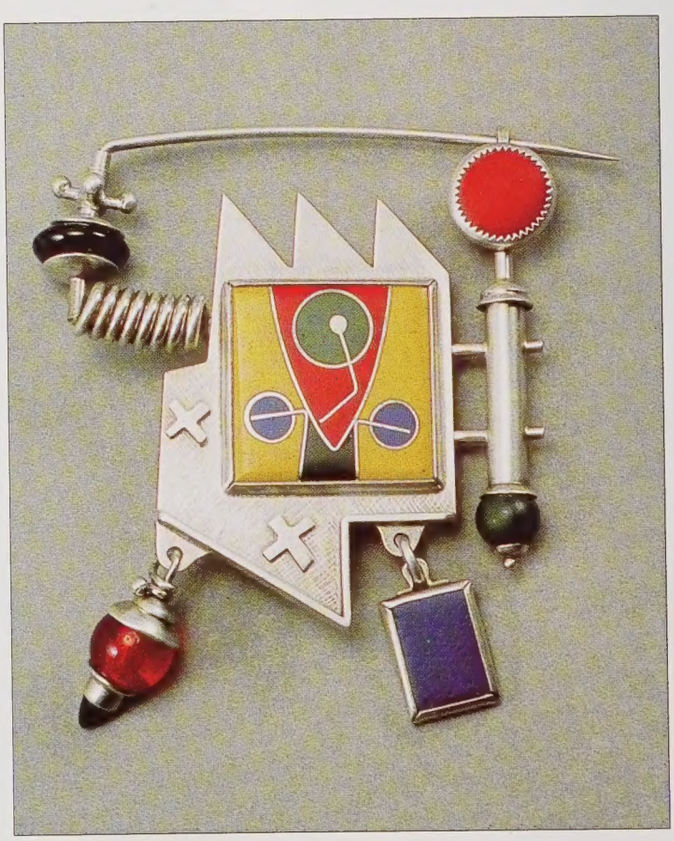
Over the course of a few months, I visited Brummel weekly and got to know him over numerous cups of coffee. Though my intent was to interrogate him about specific technical aspects of his art, our conversations invariably turned to aesthetics.

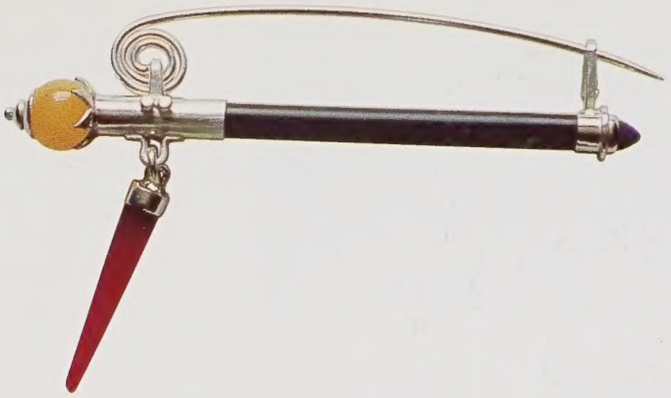
One of Heinz Brummel's concerns is our culture's visual illiteracy. Children are not encouraged to look at objects critically, nor are they taught to appreciate design or enjoy an object simply for its aesthetic value. Our society is so consumer oriented that objects are desirable simply because they are material. This tendency generates mindless consumption and allows marketers to impose choice limitations with little, if any, aesthetic consideration. Brummel laments the lack of encouragement for those outside the arts to discriminate or have aesthetic opinions regarding the thousands of items they live with, use, and see everyday.

Brummel spent his early twenties living in Europe, primarily in an idyllic rural community in south central France, where the residents subsisted by making and selling simple hand work of leathergoods, jewelry, and clothing. The romance of such a lifestyle made a deep impression upon the artist. After returning to America, he began his only formal instruction – one semester of jewelry design at the University of Minnesota College of Home Economics. He spent years learning by doing, making jewelry in his free time between day jobs of demolition and restaurant work. Far from limiting, Brummel's lack of structured education has left him unsullied. His work retains a lucidity and embodiment of character it might not have had had he spent four years at a design school. While he admires the knowledge and the techniques that can be acquired in such settings, he has a love/hate relationship with some academic taste makers who are cushioned and protected from the marketplace by ivied walls. Brummel describes himself as a "blue collar artist," and when I remind him of his level of technical ability he responds modestly, "I've simply taken Jewelry 101 skills and honed them." In the early years he plied his craft when he could, slowly acquiring tools along with experience through trial and error. What had been a passionate hobby became a livelihood only after 1986, when Brummel had his first *real* exposure during an American Craft Council show in St. Paul. After this success he felt he could pursue jewelry full-time.









Left, clockwise from upper left

From *Blackhead on Yellow Series*, (pin)
sterling, cloisonné, black onyx, glass,
synthetic coral

From *Cosmic Garden Series*
sterling, glass, black oxidized silver chain

From *Bishop Series*, (pin)
sterling, cloisonné, black onyx, glass,
sand blasting

From *Tribute to Marsden Series*, (necklace)
sterling, sand blasted enamel,
lapis, glass, black oxidized silver chain

Above, left to right

From *Projectile Series*, (pin)
sterling, enamel, lapis, dyed bone, jade

From *Hypo Series*, (pin)
sterling, black onyx, coral, plastic

From his guileless beginnings, he has grown into a busy artist. Brummel and his assistant make innumerable pieces to fill orders contracted through American Craft Enterprises. Though he doesn't particularly enjoy marketing, he feels fortunate not to have to work the summer craft fair circuit in order to survive. He likens production work to a chess game, always considering his next move, jumping from bench to bench where one series of earrings await their enamel components, then across the room where a tray of pendants require finishing touches and shipping. For Brummel, the struggle in production is to retain the joy of making, to maintain the love relationship with the materials and processes while pursuing excellence. The demands of production mean new designs and ideas often languish in sketchbooks or remain idle in his imagination. Yet the fact that he is self-employed and can "make his own bed" is appealing to Brummel's nonconformist nature. Despite his reservations about the marketplace he is able to succeed in this competitive venue.

Brummel's personal and professional lives are intertwined. "I have two environments, both allow me to blend work and domestic life." He will take home a tray of earrings and put together an order while keeping an eye on his two young sons, Oliver and Oskar, (named after the German artist Oskar Schlemmer). Brummel lists Schlemmer along with others of the Bauhaus movement as influences in his life and art. He is inspired by artists and craftspeople of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, not for their direct influence upon him, but rather, "for being kindred spirits pulling water from the same archetypal well." Elements of Brummel's work might be compared to those produced by the *Wiener Werkstätte* studios, which, over a span of forty years encompassing Nouveau, Bauhaus, and Arts and Crafts, produced thousands of *objects d'art* featuring elements of nature molded into formal geometries, and functional objects.

During my last visit, I wondered if Brummel defined himself as craftsperson or artist. "I defy, confront, and resent the arrogant barrier between artist and craftsman." Refusing to categorize himself, he prefers to straddle the rather ambiguous line, a delineation that is probably more a public perception than a reality. Blending a fine artist's vocabulary and sensibility with the execution associated with a skilled craftsperson, his works realize both. He approaches and considers his next work as would any painter or sculptor – simply on a smaller scale. When I left Heinz Brummel's studio, he was back at his workbench making beautiful objects incorporating functional elements, a practice which for this artist defines craft.

Sarah Stonich is a writer who lives in St. Paul, Minnesota.

THE STORY OF THE PURPLE HEART

TEXT BY YVONNE J. MARKOWITZ AND DAVID M. MARKOWITZ

FIGURE 1
The Revolutionary Badge of Military Merit awarded to Sergeant Elijah Churchill in May 1783. Photograph courtesy of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, New Windsor Cantonment, State Historic Site.

THERE IS A LEGEND surrounding the defeat and surrender of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815 which describes how the Commander scornfully noted that the uniforms of the arresting soldiers lacked official decorations indicative of distinguished service or valor. Assuming that the British viewed him as an unworthy opponent, Napoleon voiced his indignation at what he perceived to be a deliberate insult. Later, when informed that military honors were not the prerogative of the enlisted man, he expressed disbelief that a country could so disregard the service of the common recruit as to deny him recognition for outstanding performance.

In his treatment of his troops, Napoleon was perhaps inspired by the actions of another great military commander – one whose patriotism and leadership brought victory to the Continental Army at Yorktown in October 1781. It is especially fitting that the first military decoration for the common man was created by one of the founders of the world's youngest democracy. General George Washington, appointed Commander-in-chief of the Continental Army by the Second Continental Congress, had served his country unremittedly since June of 1775, earning the respect and loyalty of the patriot army. After the war, his timely intervention at the Newburgh, New York encampment during the winter of 1783 prevented a mutiny by troops unpaid and unrecognized by a weak and faltering Congress.[1] Washington's reasoned, emotional appeal in a tense meeting with the dissidents on the evening of March 15 thwarted a budding uprising against the interim government. His success that day was in due largely to a deeply felt respect based on common experience and shared history.

Perhaps the troops were also recalling Washington's actions of Wednesday, August 7, 1782. From Continental Army headquarters in Newburgh-on-the-Hudson, the general issued an order establishing two separate awards honoring the efforts and sacrifices of enlisted men. The first, the Honor Badge of Distinction, was presented to

> *...veteran Non-commissioned officers and soldiers of the army who have served more than three years with bravery, fidelity, and good conduct.*[2]

It consisted of a white, fabric chevron to be sewn on the left sleeve. For those who served more than six years, two chevrons, to be fixed in a parallel arrangement on the sleeve, were granted. The second, more prestigious award, however, was the Badge of Military Merit, later known as the Purple Heart. The text of Washington's directive states:

> *The General, ever desirous to cherish virtuous ambition in his soldiers, as well as to foster and encourage every species of Military merit, directs that whenever any singularly meritorious action is performed, the author of it shall be permitted to wear on his facings over his left breast, the figure of a heart in purple cloth, or silk, edged with narrow lace and binding. Not only instances of unusual gallantry, but also of extraordinary fidelity and essential service in any way shall meet with due reward. Before this favor can be conferred on any man, the particular fact, or facts, on which it is grounded must be set forth to the Commander-in-chief accompanied with certificates from the Commanding officers of the regiment and brigade to which the Candidate for reward belonged, or other incontestable proofs, and upon granting it, the name and regiment of the person with the action so certified are to be enrolled in the book of merit which will be kept at the orderly office. Men who have merited this last distinction to be suffered to pass all guards and sentinels which officers are permitted to do.*[3]

The order ends with a brief, compelling statement by the Commander-in-chief:

> *The road to glory in a patriot army and a free country is thus opened to all.*[4]

Eligibility for the heart-shaped Badge of Military Merit was to be determined by a board of high ranking officers[5] whose recommendations were made directly to Washington. The five member board met on two occasions in April 1783 and issued a report proposing two sergeants, Elijah Churchill of Enfield, Connecticut, and William Brown of Stamford, Connecticut, for the award and its accompanying certificate.[6] These men were invested and received their decorations on May 3, 1783. A third and final badge was awarded to Sergeant Daniel Bissell of East Windsor, Connecticut in June 1783.

It was for two successful raids upon fortified encampments in enemy territory that Churchill received the Badge of Military Merit (fig. 1). The award, now on display at the New Windsor Cantonment in Vails Gate, New York (fig. 2), is the only extant Purple Heart with a secure provenance. Kept for generations within the Churchill family, it was eventually donated to the museum in 1961. The decoration, whose design is attributed to Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant,[7] is heart-shaped and fabricated from bias-cut, purple wool cloth with a hand-stitched metallic trim. Two sprigs and the word *Merit* are embroidered across the body.

The second recipient of the Badge of Military Merit, Sergeant William Brown, was twenty years old when he led an advance party of Captain Samuel Comstock's 5th Connecticut Regiment against a British contingent at Yorktown on the evening of October 14, 1781.

After the war, Brown moved to Ohio where he died in 1808. The whereabouts of his badge is unknown, reportedly *lost* in the 1920s.[8] In their recommendation to Washington, the board stated that

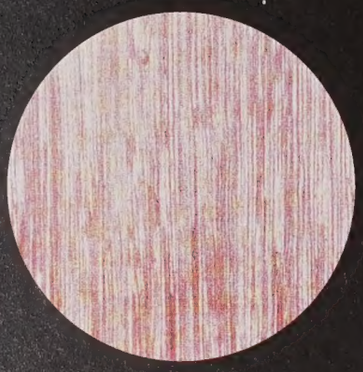
> *...in the assault of the enemy's left redoubt at Yorktown, Virginia...(Brown) conducted a forelorn hope with great bravery, propriety and deliberate firmness...*[9]

The third Revolutionary Badge of Military Merit was presented to Sergeant Daniel Bissell, 2nd Connecticut Regiment, for an act of intelligence within the British stronghold established in New York City.

The fate of Sergeant Bissell's badge remains controversial. While the soldier's military records were lost in a house fire in Richmond, New York in 1813, his Badge of Military Merit was purportedly found in the 1920s in a Deerfield, New Hampshire barn by Captain William L. Willey (fig. 3). Willey donated the heart to the New Hampshire Society of the Cincinnati located in the Ladd-Gilman House, American Independence Museum, Exeter, New Hampshire. The decoration remains on view to the public.

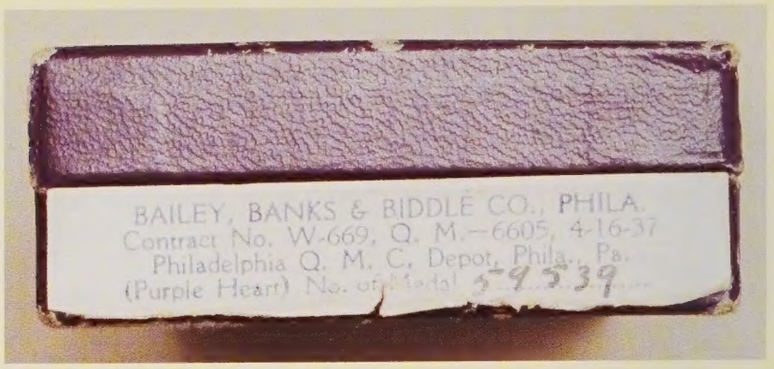
FIGURE 2
The Den, New Windsor Cantonment, Vails Gate, New York. Watercolor by Ray Quigley, 1987, after a 1908 photograph. Image courtesy of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, New Windsor Cantonment, State Historic Site.

FIGURE 3
The Revolutionary Badge of Military Merit purportedly awarded to Sergeant Daniel Bissell in June 1783. Photograph by Dennis A. Waters and courtesy of the American Independence Museum, Exeter, New Hampshire.



Purpleheart

It may be that the color and form of the Badge of Military Merit had its origins in *purpleheart*, a highly valued Revolutionary War material. A dense, smooth-grained wood, purpleheart belongs to the genus *Peltogyne* (especially *P. purpurea*). It is stronger than oak and highly resistant to wood-destroying fungi and termites. Its principal source is tropical America, from Mexico to Brazil. In Washington's time, purpleheart referred to the wooden carriage in which certain guns were mounted. It was especially adaptable for use with firearms and artillery. By virtue of its strength, resilience, and durability, it symbolized those qualities most esteemed in a soldier.

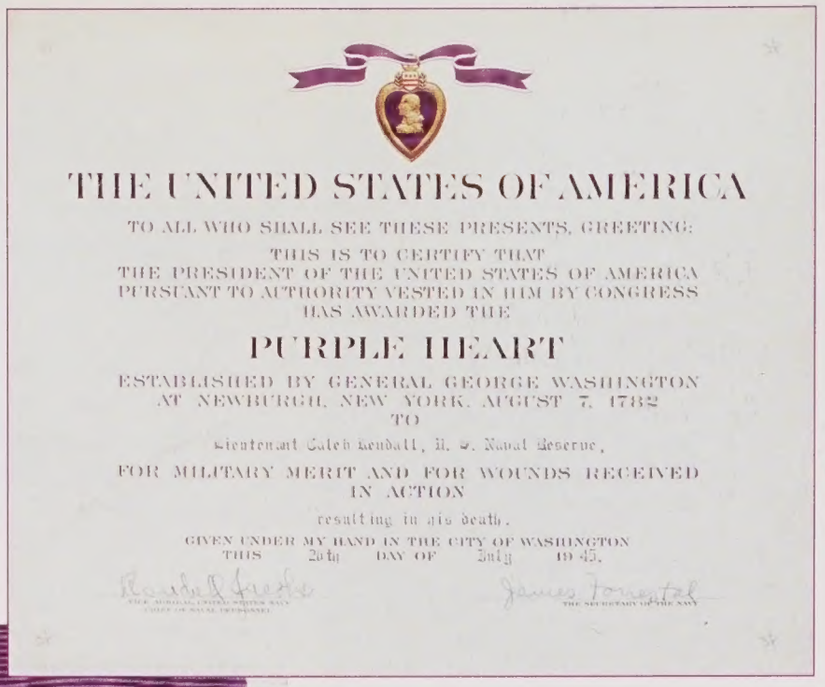

BAILEY, BANKS & BIDDLE CO., PHILA.
Contract No. W-669, Q. M.-6605, 4-16-37
Philadelphia Q. M. C. Depot, Phila., Pa.
(Purple Heart) No. of Medal 5-9539

RIGHT
Private Clement T. Gleason, 1919. Photograph courtesy of the Museum of Our National Heritage, Lexington Massachusetts, 1996/056.

TOP, ABOVE, AND RIGHT
The Purple Heart of Private Clement T. Gleason (in original box), Museum of Our National Heritage, Lexington Massachusetts, Gift of Jean Johnson 96.046.8. Photograph by Maria Daniels.

In 1918 Clement T. Gleason (1900-1995), an 18 year old resident of Reading, Massachusetts, enlisted as a private in the 104th Infantry Regiment of the 26th or *Yankee* Division. He and his fellow servicemen were deployed to France where they participated in the Engagement at the Aprement Sector (April 1918), the Aisne-Marne Offensive (July 1918), the Advance on St. Mihiel (September 1918) and the 5th Battle of Verdun (November 1918). It was on July 17, during the Aisne-Marne Offensive, that Gleason was gassed by the enemy and hospitalized for several weeks. For his injuries, he received the wound chevron. When the Badge of Military was reinstated as the Purple Heart in 1931, the award was made retroactive and presented to those veterans previously honored with a wound chevron.

The Purple Heart of Clement T. Gleason, part of the permanent collection of the Museum of our National Heritage, Lexington Massachusetts, retains its original purple box with a Bailey, Banks and Biddle label. An American maker and retailer of fine silver, medals, and jewelry with origins in the first part of the nineteenth century, Bailey, Banks and Biddle is also known as the producer of the Order of the Society of the Cincinnati, a decoration that shares a Revolutionary War history with the Purple Heart.



THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING:

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
PURSUANT TO AUTHORITY VESTED IN HIM BY CONGRESS
HAS AWARDED THE

PURPLE HEART

ESTABLISHED BY GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON
AT NEWBURGH, NEW YORK, AUGUST 7, 1782
TO

Lieutenant Caleb Kendall, U. S. Naval Reserve,

FOR MILITARY MERIT AND FOR WOUNDS RECEIVED
IN ACTION

resulting in his death.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON
THIS 26th DAY OF July 1945.

ABOVE
The Purple Heart
of Lt. Caleb Kendall.

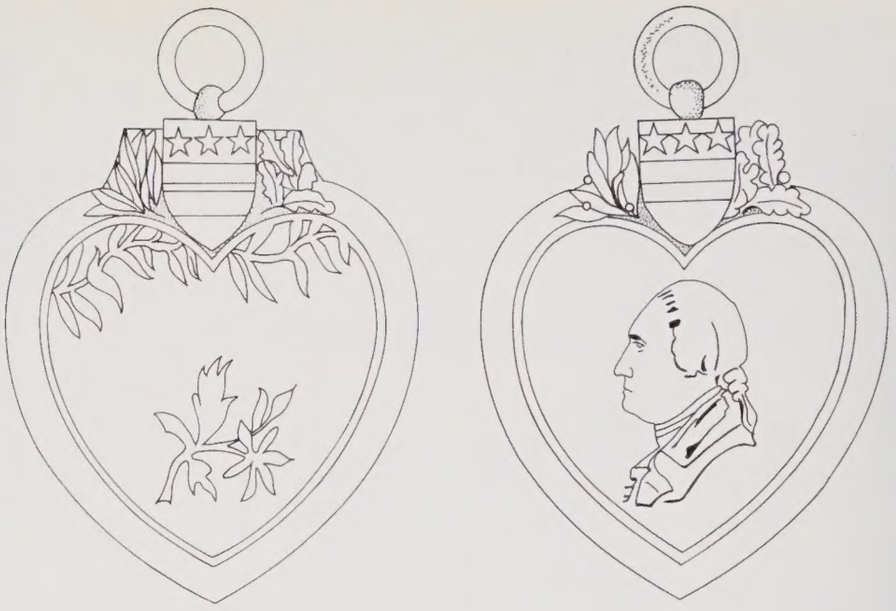
TOP
The Purple Heart certificate
of Lt. Caleb Kendall
issued July 26, 1945.

Photographs
by Maria Daniels

Caleb Kendall of Belmont, Massachusetts was a Harvard junior when he enlisted in the Navy on December 1, 1941, one week before the bombing of Pearl harbor and U. S. entry into the war. Trained as a fighter pilot, he served on the carriers, *Enterprise* and *Intrepid*, which saw action in the Pacific, including the Gilbert and Marshall Islands and Truk.

In January 1945 Lt. Kendall was assigned to the USS *Bunker Hill* as a Corsair pilot with Squadron 84. As Task Force 58, their field of operations included Tokyo, Iwo Jima, the Inland Sea, Ryukyus, and Okinowa. On May 11, as Kendall and his team of pilots were being briefed for take off in the ship's readyroom, the ship was bombed and then hit by a kamikaze pilot. All fifty pilots in the readyroom were killed instantly.

For his achievements and heroism, Lt. Kendall was awarded numerous citations and medals including the Gold Star, the Victory Medal, the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Purple Heart with its accompanying certificate. The medals were presented to his wife, Rosamond Brown Kendall, and infant son, Timothy.



RIGHT, FIGURE 4A
First sketch by Elizabeth Hill for the revised Badge of Military Merit, 1930. It was based on the badge discovered in a New Hampshire barn in the 1920s and believed to have once belonged to Sergeant Daniel Bissell. The government was unaware, at the time, of the heart passed down in the Churchill family. Drawing adapted from Borch and Brown, *The Purple Heart, A History of America's Oldest Military Decoration* (Tempe, AZ, 1996), fig. 14.

FAR RIGHT, FIGURE 4B
This second sketch by Elizabeth Hill was approved by the Commission of Fine Arts and passed along to John R. Sinnock, a Mint engraver who fabricated the plaster model. Drawing adapted from Borch and Brown, *The Purple Heart, A History of America's Oldest Military Decoration* (Tempe, AZ, 1996), fig. 15.

The controversy surrounding the badge arises from uncorroborated facts associated with its discovery. Neither the Continental uniform on which the heart was supposedly attached nor the barn where it was found have been located. Equally disturbing is the fact that Bissell's heart is made of silk and lacks the embroidered *Merit.* It is possible, however, that Bissell's badge, awarded a month after the investment of Churchill and Brown, was fabricated from a different stock of cloth and the text omitted for expediency.

The story of the Purple Heart would have ended with the Revolutionary War were it not for the efforts of Generals John J. Pershing, John L. Hines, Charles P. Summerall, and Douglas MacArthur, all Army Chiefs of Staff after WWI. In 1921 Pershing attempted to establish a *Third Decoration* for those who did not meet the stringent criteria required for the Distinguished Service Medal or the Distinguished Service Cross. While his primary goal was the recognition of meritorious service in WWI, it was also his intention to extend the award to peace time service as well as making it available

> *... to any member of a foreign military force or any civilian, American or foreign, who had or might hereafter, render highly meritorious service to the United States.*[10]

His proposal, the source of endless debate, was presented to the Advisory Board of Legislation. While eventually rejected, it was not forgotten. Shortly thereafter, artist C. S. Gifford created a simple medallic design for the War Department. His drawing, labeled *The Decoration of the Purple Heart*, consisted of an undecorated heart-shaped design for the obverse (the front) and the text *Founded by / Genl George Washington / August 7, 1782 / Restored February 22, 1922 / by President Harding* above the space reserved for the recipient's name on the reverse (the back). Gifford's design illustrates a clear attempt to resurrect Washington's Badge of Military Merit. That the drawing also included suspension bars with the Army shield, Navy anchor, Marine Corps globe and Air Force wings demonstrates that the award was envisioned as a multi-service one.[11]

Pershing's successor, Major General John L. Hines, continued the campaign to revive the heart-shaped decoration. A study by the Army War College for the War Department in 1925 also recommended its restoration by Executive Order based on the need

> *...for a decoration to be awarded for heroic acts not performed in actual combat with an armed enemy...(to be) open in time of peace and war...and limited to members of the Army of the United States.*[12]

For some reason, the study and its recommendations were shelved. When Charles Summerall became Army Chief of Staff in 1926, he requested that Congress consider an award along the lines of Washington's badge with the intention that it be awarded on the basis of military merit. A Congressional bill, while drafted, was not enacted.[13]

Several years later, a patriotic society undertook the revival of the Badge of Military Merit in the form of a medal based on the original design.[14] This time the recommendation received the full support of the War Department, although a decision was made to postpone reenactment. Finally, Douglas MacArthur, who succeeded Summerall in 1930, achieved positive results. His efforts were no doubt aided by government preparations for the bicentennial celebration of Washington's birth in 1932. MacArthur expanded the definition of *meritorious service*, however, to include wounds inflicted by an enemy. He would later describe his reasons for the badge's restoration and its new meaning in his autobiography *Reminiscences:*

> *First, it is the oldest in American history, and antedates practically all the famous military medals of the world; second, it comes from the greatest of all Americans, George Washington, and thereby carries with it something of the reverence which haloes his great name; and third, it is the only decoration which is completely intrinsic in that it does not depend upon approval or favor by anyone. It goes only to those who are wounded in battle, and enemy action alone determines its award. It is a true badge of courage and every breast that wears it can beat with pride.*[15]

MacArthur submitted two designs for the revived medal to A. A. Weinman, sculptor advisor at the Commission of Fine Arts. These designs, both variants of an inscribed metal heart, were based on recommendations by J. C. Fitzpatrick, then serving as assistant chief in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress.

The actual sketches submitted to the Commission were prepared by Elizabeth Hill, an artist employed in the Heraldic Division, Office of the Quartermaster General. Her credits at the time included the 1926 design for the Distinguished Flying Cross. Ms. Hill's initial drawing for the revised badge (fig. 4a) was based on the heart purportedly awarded to Sergeant Daniel Bissell and included in the exhibition plans for the upcoming bicentennial celebration.[16] Weinman, however, approved the artist's second sketch[17] whose obverse consisted of a profile bust of Washington in Continental uniform set in a heart-shaped field (fig. 4b). The heart itself is surmounted by Washington's coat of arms flanked by sprigs of oak and laurel.[18] On the reverse is the text *For Military Merit* with a space left for the recipient's name. The final design called for a purple enameled heart with a gilt bronze border measuring 4.25 cm. H. x 3.5 cm. W. Superimposed on the enamel was the gilt bronze relief bust of Washington. The shield and leaves were to be enameled red, white and green while the medal was to be suspended from a white-edged purple ribbon with a rectangular hoop attached to the bale.

The plaster model for the Purple Heart, based on Ms. Hill's design, was fabricated by sculptor John R. Sinnock, an engraver at the Philadelphia Mint.[19] Sinnock's model was approved by the Fine Arts Commission and this version was subsequently made official on February 22, 1931 by General Order No. 3 of the War Department. The decoration, now called the *Purple Heart*, was made retroactive and presented to eligible Army veterans. Included were hundreds who had served in Europe during WWI and had demonstrated "singularly meritorious acts of extraordinary fidelity" or had been medically treated for enemy-inflicted wounds or poisoning by gas (Sidebar 2). For those killed in action, the award was presented post-humously to the next-of-kin.

During WWII, the Purple Heart became a multi-service award (Sidebar 3) and in 1962, President John F. Kennedy

> *"...extended eligibility to any civilian national of the United States who, while serving under competent authority in any capacity with a (U.S.) armed force..." received wounds requiring medical intervention.*[20]

Later, President Reagan issued an order authorizing the award for service members wounded or killed as a result of an international terrorist attack or peacekeeping mission.

Yvonne J. Markowitz, Ph. D. candidate, is the Suzanne E. Chapman Artist, Department of Ancient Egyptian, Nubian, and Near Eastern Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

David M. Markowitz, Ph.D. is a Research Fellow, Logistics Management Institute, McLean, Virginia.

Notes

1 Among those ready to challenge civil authority were the veteran officer corps. For an account of Washington's handling of this volatile situation, see Richard Brookheiser, *Founding Father, Rediscovering George Washington* (New York 1996), p. 39-45.

2 John C. Fitzpatrick (editor), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, vol. 24 (Washington, D.C., 1932), p. 487.

3 Ibid., p. 488.

4 Ibid., p. 488.

5 The appointed five member board consisted of Brigadier General Greaton (President), Colonel Stewart, Lt. Col. Sprout and Majors Fish and Trescott.

6 For a transcript of Elijah Churchill's certificate, see John C. Fitzpatrick, "The Story of the Order of the Purple Heart," *The Definitive Writings of George Washington* (Washington, D.C., 1932), p. 715.

7 Major L'Enfant would later provide designs for the Order of the Society of the Cincinnati and the plans for the city of Washington, D.C. See Frank Athanason and Leonard Carlton (editors), *The Legacy of the Purple Heart* (Paducah, KT, 1987), p. 14.

8 Bill Widell, "The Purple Heart of Daniel Bissell: Artifact or Myth?" Archives, American Independence Museum, Exeter, N.H.

9 J. Fitzpatrick, "The Story of the Order of the Purple Heart," p. 712.

10 "The Purple Heart," Special Collections Division, US Military Academy, West Point, NY, p. 11. Written later Ronald Reagan's Executive Order of 2/23/84, this excellent article provides accurate and detailed information on the reinstatement of the Purple Heart.

11 Gifford proposed an Air Force design even though the Air Force did not exist as a separate service at this time. See F.L. Borch and F.C. Brown, op. cit., p. 10-12.

12 Memorandum of the War Department General Staff to the Chief-of-Staff concerning The Order of Military Merit, dated June 12, 1925, as reproduced in F.L. Borch and F.C. Brown, fig. 9.

13 F. Athanason and L. Carlton, op. cit., p. 17.

14 "The Purple Heart," op. cit., p. 13.

15 Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York, 1964), p. 102-3.

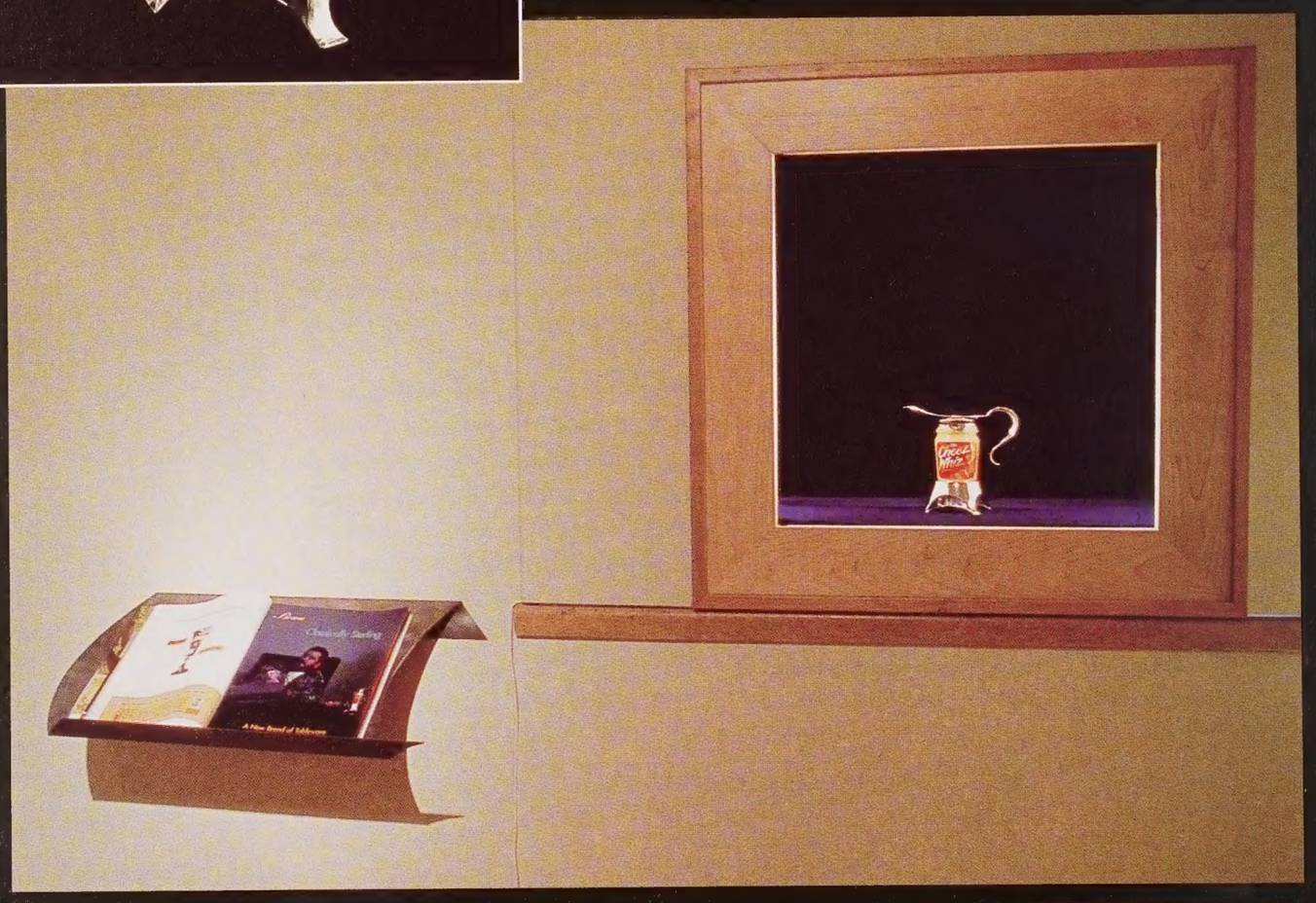
16 Apparently, the government was unaware of the heart passed down in the Churchill family.

17 The first sketch was based on Sgt. Bissell's unprovenenced heart which was displayed in Washington, D.C in 1932.

18 The oak and laurel leaves were replaced by generic leaves in the final design.

19 John Sinnock would later create the reverse of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's third inaugural medal. See Neil MacNeil, *The President's Medal, 1789-1977* (New York, 1977), p. 98-101.

20 Executive Order 11016, April 25, 1962. See F.L. Borch and F.C. Brown, op. cit., p. 95.



Observations

Left, clockwise from top right

Portable French Fry Server, (utensil ad), 1997
sterling
4 x 3 x 2½"

Museum Installation

Cheese Whiz Server, 1996
sterling
7 x 4 x 5"

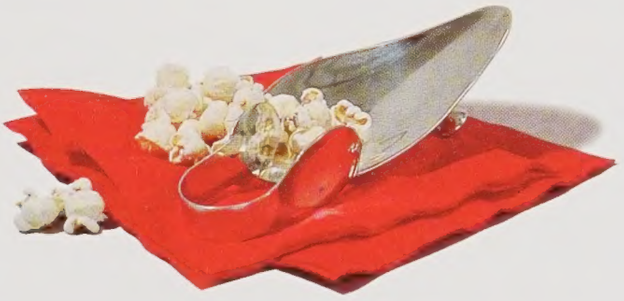
Recent cultural developments in America can be characterized by a conspicuous blending of manner and subsequently, class distinctions. The image projected by a wealthy celebrity or powerful executive clad in faded jeans and a plain white T-shirt is not atypical nor undesirable. The established upper class's seemingly casual and sometimes scruffy approach to life appears little different from the attitudes shared by the middle and lower classes. This blurring of social lines extends beyond the casual spirit of dress down Fridays and sexy five o'clock shadows into society's preferred forms of entertainment and even the foods we eat.

The works of metalsmith Meredith Beau shed light and offer commentary on this curious cultural phenomenon. Beau creates eating utensils inspired by the types of foods typically eaten today. The artist claims the wealthy are just as likely to eat Cheese Whiz as are other members of society. By producing food specific utensils like her *Cheese Whiz Server* in expensive and socially charged materials such as sterling silver Beau enables wealthier processed cheese food lovers to subtlely distinguish themselves from the masses.

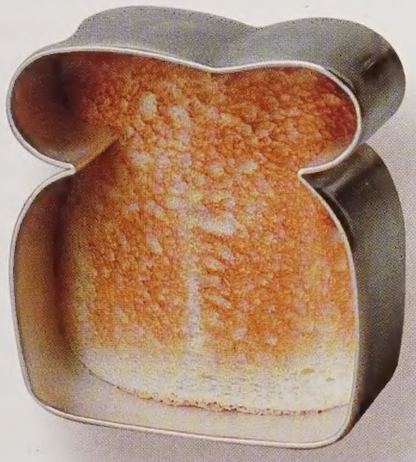
Beau's works encourage the viewer to consider the complexities of class and consumer demand marketing. The artist developed a series of bogus advertisements after realizing there was a need to educate the viewer about proper use of the utensils. When seen in a traditional museum/gallery context, the objects are installed next to their corresponding advertisements. Beau's "New Breed of Tableware" maintains the elegance and formality of an antique silver tea service and contributes to the contemporary cultural dialogue. It is refreshing to see a female artist abandon the all too typical thematic implications associated with broken hearts and ovaries in favor of an approach laden with wit and irony.

Summer Orndorff is an M.F.A. candidate in art history at the Savannah College of Art and Design in Savannah, Georgia.

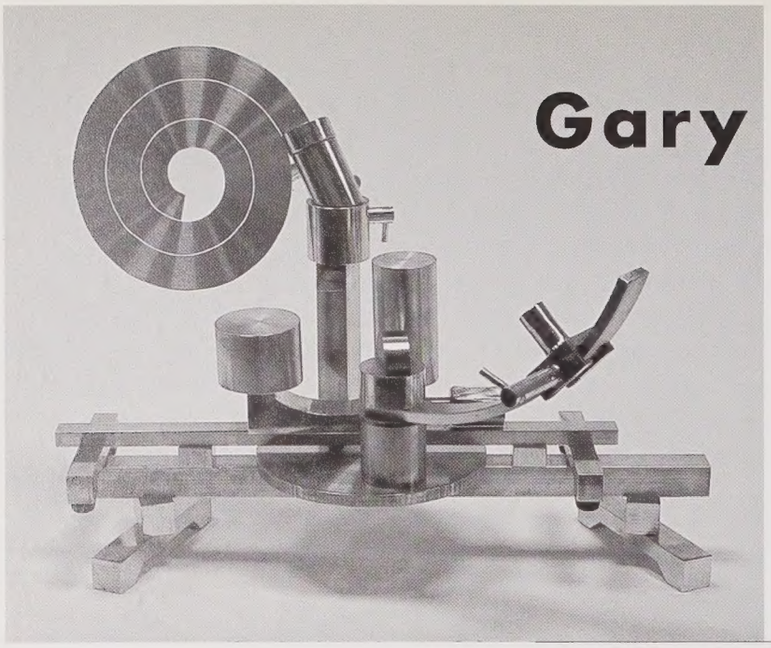
Meredith Beau



Popcorn Utensil, 1996
sterling
5 x 3 x 1"



Crust Cutter, 1996
sterling
4½ x 4 x 1½"



Gary Justis

Text by Polly Ullrich

Above, left to right

Adjustable Sex Lock, 1996
aluminum, steel, copper, brass
15¼ x 20 x 12"
Photograph courtesy Klein Art Works

Untitled, 1988
aluminum, electronics
102 x 163½ x 42"

Easel, 1995
aluminum, copper, wood
7 x 2½ x 2½'

Imagine a small boy in a Kansas field in the 1950s. The boy, aged five, has constructed a wooden airplane with two seats, one for himself and one for a friend. He has tilted the plane toward the sky. Attached to the front of the plane is a propeller with a large rubber inner tube wound tightly to launch the plane up into the heavens. He is utterly, completely certain that once he has wound up that rubber band the plane will propel him into a new and transcendent realm for investigation, out of reach of the tediously restrictive aspects of childhood.

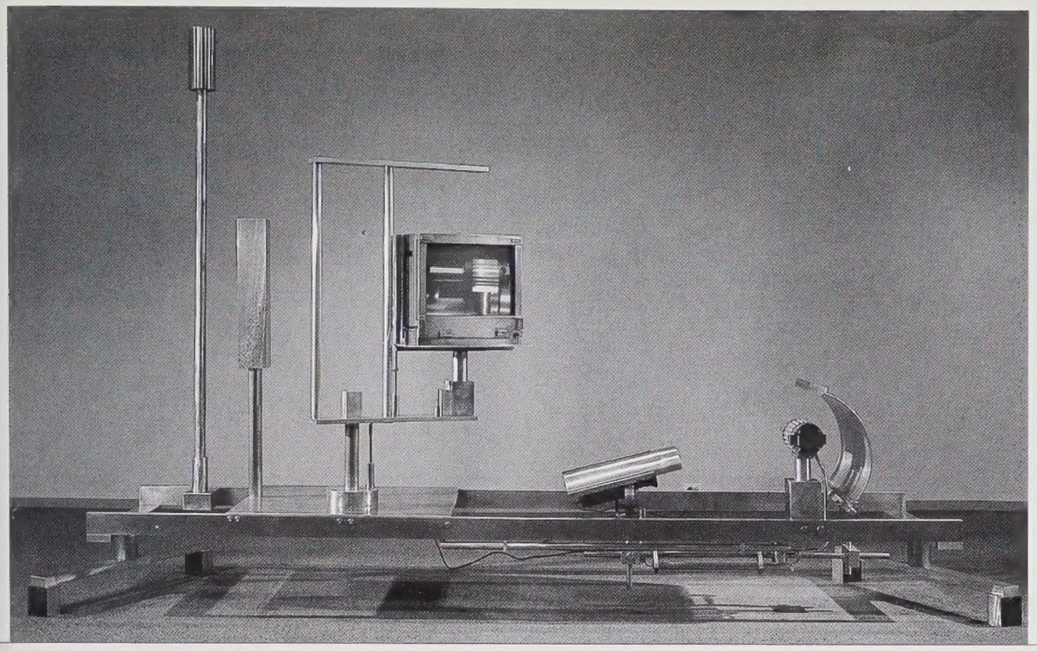
Despite the failure of his first attempt, that Kansas boy, now the Chicago metal sculptor Gary Justis, continues, forty years later, to construct complicated, mechanical and enigmatic objects as vehicles of transcendence. While Justis is known nationally and internationally, he is somewhat out of the mainstream of contemporary postmodern art, a period known for its challenges to the use of objects for artmaking and the emphasis of the idea behind an art work at the expense of materiality and craftsmanship. Even at age five, Justis had become convinced that an object "could, in a sense, be the mind's salvation." During my recent visit to his studio on Chicago's North Side, the artist stated "that we could use objects to escape and put our minds in a different plane, much the way great literature does. I think objects can do that. Paintings certainly can."

Justis, who has been labeled a "maverick" by *Chicago Tribune* critic Alan Artner, continues to champion what might be termed *craft* values. As a result of a personal art philosophy that is both highly intellectual as well as humanistic he makes both non-functional metal sculpture and functional metal objects. These values enable the artist to find metaphor, even magic, in objects of daily use, a kind of mythology within the mundane; and they emphasize the use of the human hand and keen craftsmanship.

Considering the works and the assumptions which help to produce them, it is probably no surprise to learn that Justis studied ceramics at Wichita State University, where he received a BFA. He moved on to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, receiving an MFA in sculpture in 1979, where he then taught for many years. Currently he teaches sculpture at Northwestern University.

Justis grew up in Maize, Kansas, the son of a contractor and part-time inventor, who ran a backyard shop at home to devise new kinds of sod planters and reciprocating saws, as well as go-carts and other peculiar vehicles for the children in the family to drive around their Kansas property. "I've always seen my work as a kind of extension of my father's dialogue with functionality," the artist said. "He was trying to invent tools to make his life easier."

Function has been a major theme in the sculptor's work for the last twenty years. Indeed, most of his work is always *doing* something. Small motors



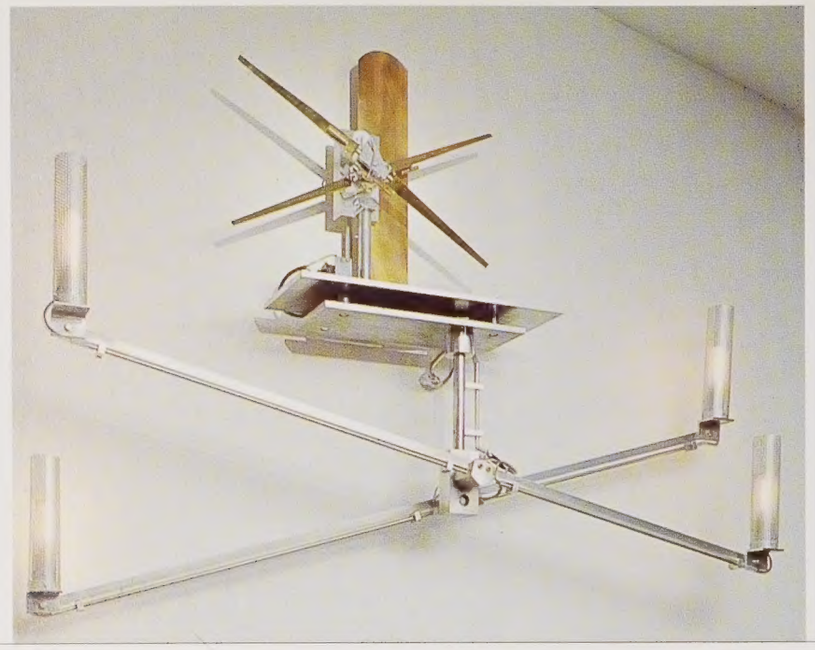
run, lights blink, gongs chime, arms rotate or spin, each movement carefully timed to repeat, over and over, at a specified interval of time. These cycles of movement and sound, which can range from twenty seconds to three and a half minutes, are meant to induce a startled, then a meditative instant for the viewer, startled in the surprising discovery that the works emit sounds and move, and meditative in the wait for these eruptions to repeat again and again. "I'm hoping to draw attention to that strange realm of anticipation where time begins to slow down and then stops," Justis said. "It's a way of using time and movement as a kind of malleable material. Movement becomes a material you can manipulate, and time becomes a material that is plastic. It can be stretched, or limited, or pressed. It's a subtle sort of material, it's visually elusive, but it's a material none the less." Justis's *Untitled*, 1992, which was included in the prestigious *Art in Chicago 1945 – 1995* survey exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago this year, is a good example. The 9 foot-long, highly polished aluminum structure contains a small gong that pings musically when a hammer strikes it gently at regular intervals.

Paradoxical combinations abound in Justis's work. Many of the objects, from the purely aesthetic sculptures to the chandeliers which actually light a space, are gorgeously crafted, handmade machinery, all drilled, polished, cut and assembled by Justis in his studio. These are machines, but they are also aesthetic objects, meant to be icons or meditative tools. For a time, Justis constructed machine art that referred to ancient gods and was based on his longstanding study of Marcel Duchamp, whose machinelike constructions shrewdly blended art and life, the sacred and the useful. Duchamp's 1923 masterwork, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*, also called the *Large Glass*, now at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, is an ambiguous assemblage of machine images pressed between large glass plates. The *Large Glass* stands as an extraordinary mixture of machinery, mythology, and eroticism. Duchamp's drive to strip art of its pretentiousness – insisting that art can be made out of anything, from everyday materials to the most complex processes, such as physics – goes to the heart of a Justis sculpture, with its roots in equipment, technology, and tools. The kinetics in Justis's art also recall Duchamp, whose interest in the representation of movement occasioned the notorious painting *Nude Descending a Staircase* in 1912.

At its most basic level, Justis's art is an attempt to reconcile the age old conflict between technology and nature. Much of his latest work is horizontal, which often brings to mind a landscape. The idea of healing the breach between an industrial landscape and a natural landscape goes back to Justis's experience of wide open farm fields in Kansas; but it also indicates his ease with mechanics and his ability to link the *garden* of the imagination with technical prowess. These are qualities not always found in the art world now. While the artist likes to point out that we are in a post-industrial age that is "beginning to look on machinery with a sort of nostalgia," many viewers are still brought up short by an art that plays out the enigmas and myths of our organic, human consciousness through hard-edged mechanical objects and techniques.

And technique, especially the craftsmanship of the hand, is a deep and abiding love for Justis. "I think that the hand is inextricably linked to the processes of the mind, so that's why I think it's important for me to build my own pieces," he said.

"I want a dialogue with the work. For me, an act of making art is a continual dialogue, very physical, very athletic, and at the same time intellectual. That goes counter to current art thinking. With a lot of the new art, the metaphor comes from the purity of the idea. The object has become secondary, so it has to have no little catching points on it that the eye will stop at and question, because that brings you into the world of materiality. Things that are manufactured are devoid of those little character attributes that come from hand work, and are perfect for that kind of thinking. For me, the material forms a dialogue and it does have expression within the minutiae and within all the tiny



Left
Strong's Mill, 1989
aluminum, bronze, lamps
6 x 4' x 18"

Right
Niagara Lamp, 1994
aluminum, brass, copper
17 x 14 x 5"

little things that we see on the work. And those figure into the overall idea. So to me any technique is a vehicle for expression."

Oddly, this idea also comes from Duchamp, who thumbed his nose at the art world earlier in the century by introducing his *Readymades*, a series of store-bought bottle racks, urinals, and other paraphernalia which he signed and submitted to exhibitions as art objects in an attempt to expand the definition of what art really was. Duchamp, however, actually was a craftsman, who spent eight years painstakingly constructing the *Large Glass*. "Duchamp said it's very important to have good craftsmanship, so the shoddiness of bad craftsmanship doesn't get in the way of the purity of the idea," Justis said.

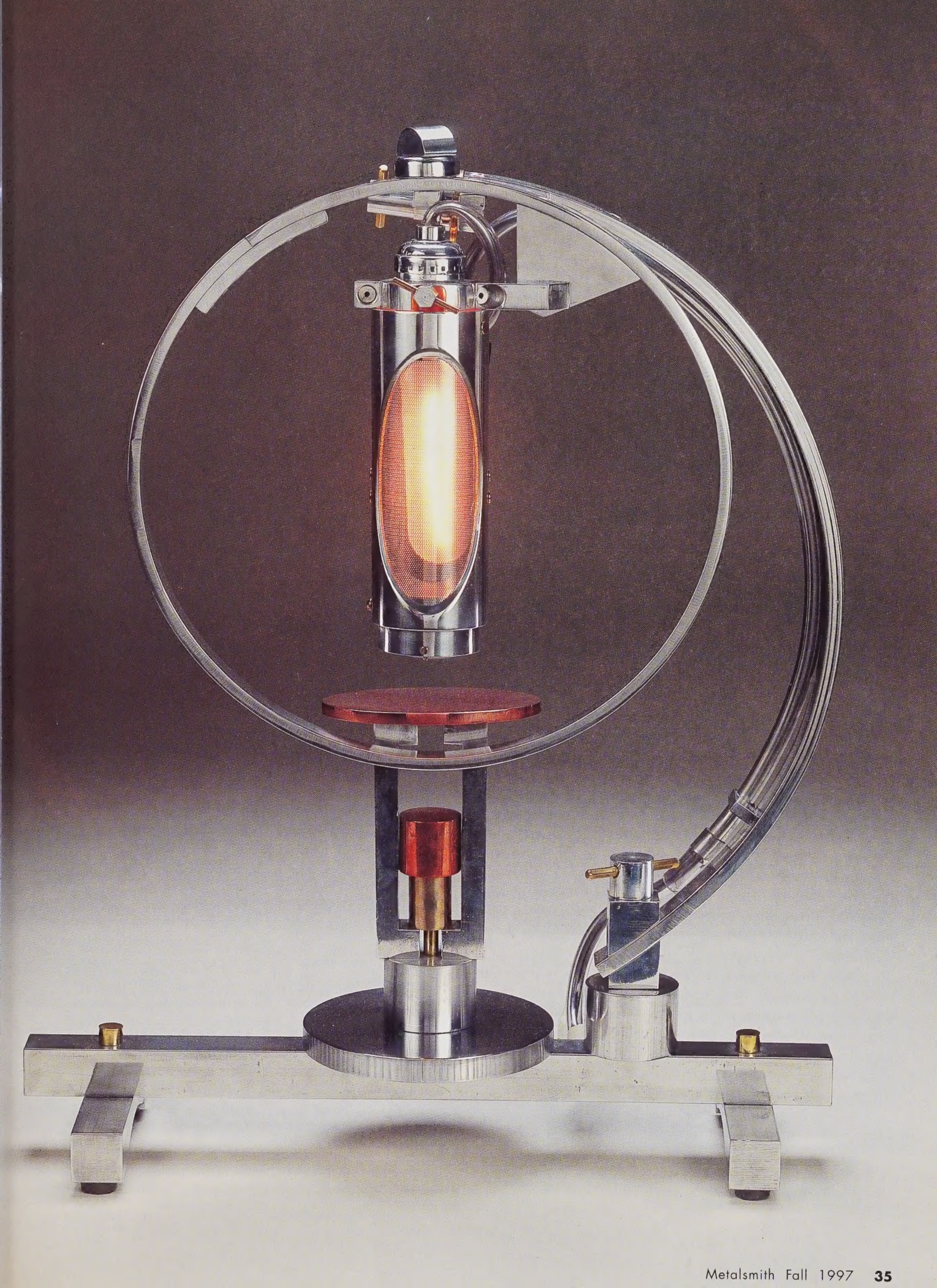
Justis works primarily with aluminum, which he buys in large bars and sheets and then cuts, polishes, and assembles, although he has also used brass, copper, wood, small motors, and electronic parts as well. Aluminum's workability, neutrality, and reflective capabilities are all attractive to Justis. Aluminum has a kind of old but *new age* reputation as well, giving it identities in the past, the present, and the future. The sculptor never welds his works. Every component is assembled with joinery, partly to escape toxic fumes from the welding process; but primarily Justis uses joinery from a practical, functional point of view. This method of fabrication allows the artist to adjust each part of the work. It expands the vocabulary of each component, and it allows him to break down and reassemble the piece for shipment to museums and collectors. "I'm always fascinated with things that are totally adjustable and mutable and can be changed in scale and function and appearance and so on because of that adjustability," he said.

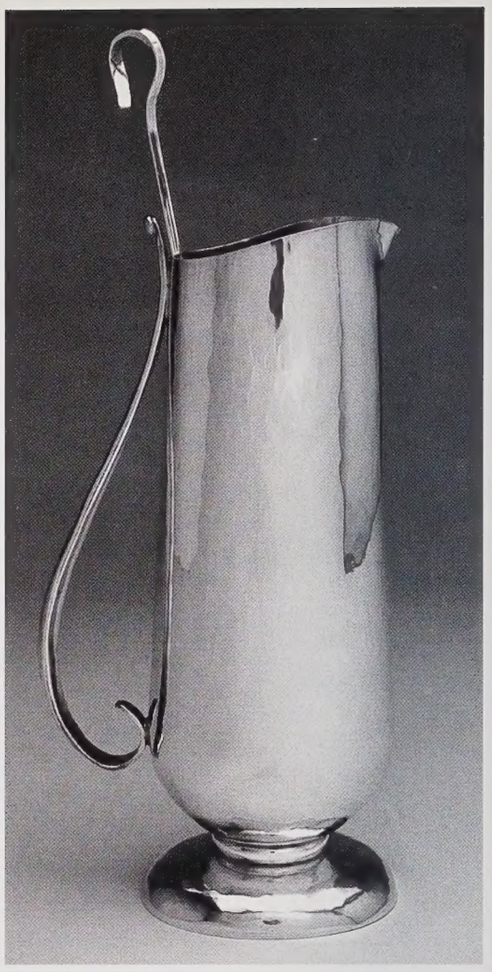
His preoccupation with function as a concept has been a constant thread throughout his work and has led him down many paths. Early on, he investigated the linguistic history of the word *function* and discovered that one definition of the word *paradox* is "beyond function." "I thought that sculpture has a very paradoxical nature to it," he said. "On the one hand, it is very useful; it has an aesthetic function and, on the other hand, it is totally useless. On the one hand, it is very valuable, and on the other hand it is valueless. So there's a paradox that's a given within the realm of art and I wanted to understand that at a deeper level."

During the 1980s, Justis made a series of *hyperfunctional* sculptures, works whose origins might have been functional, but which, through kinetics, sound, light, and movement, had a new, absurd, tongue-in-cheek appearance. Stretching and distorting the meaning of function he created chandeliers with pulsating lights or moving parts so that their usefulness was practically voided. Such pieces allowed him to investigate the boundaries between function and non-function and to question why the two categories were separate in Western European culture. The sculptor has slightly toned down his utilitarian work now, although he is currently working on a memorial that includes a chandelier with text attached to it. But his most interesting works continue to be sculptures that ride the edge, attempting to marry or reconcile function and non-function, as in *Stone's Mill*, an aluminum and bronze lamp with rotating scissorslike arms. Lit from above the piece creates ever-changing shadows on the wall. *Easel*, 1995 is a seven feet high aluminum, copper, and wood structure that dwarfs any picture placed on it.

"You know, the more you get into any discipline, the more you discover how much you don't know, " Justis said wryly. "And so, I find myself in these philosophical dilemmas time after time. And I haven't really come to any definitive conclusions about function and non-function. In retrospect, I think that's very good because it's kept me moving forward. Because if I discovered anything definitive, if I came to any solid place in my philosophy, I would stop making art. There wouldn't be any reason to push forward, because all the information is there. I've solved the mystery, so why go on?"

Polly Ullrich is an artist and writer living in Chicago.





Celebration: 50th Anniversary of the Metal Arts Guild

Ontario Crafts Council
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
September 25 – November 10, 1996

by Kathryn Hayward

"Do not follow in the footsteps of the men of old; seek what they sought," commanded Matsuo Basho in the late seventeenth century. Surprisingly, it is these words of the eminent Japanese poet written over 300 years ago that spring to mind upon seeing the *Celebration* exhibition. For over the past fifty years of the Metal Arts Guild's existence, Canadian craftspeople have continued to seek out new forms, techniques, and expressions in metal subsequently pushing the craft in new directions. The resulting works are wildly different from each other but each is true to the metalsmith's original goal.

This traveling exhibition is unique in that contemporary works are displayed as part of a continuum of artistic development. It is rare to be able to trace progression within a single gallery show, and it is remarkable that an exhibit of this scope did not become a jumble of mismatched art forms. Rather, *Celebration* is a strong show, and effectively showcases expressions in metal over the past half century.

According to legend, the five founding members of the Guild were all good friends. They held infamous dinner parties, debated the philosophical nature of art, and supported and encouraged each other for over a decade. In 1946 they decided to establish a greater presence in Canada for metal artists and thus, they established the guild. With the promotion of ferrous and non-ferrous metals as its mandate, MAG began to hold annual juried exhibitions.

A high degree of technical expertise is evident in the early works. Finely crafted hollowware was far more prevalent at that time. Influenced by the Scandinavian modern style, artists gave a great deal of attention to creating smooth and highly polished surfaces. One of the more stunning pieces in the show is Andrew Fussell's brass bowl constructed in 1958. Fussell's design is simple yet effective. Its asymmetrical lines are emphasized by its oblong shape and its brilliant sheen is intensified by a finely hammered surface.

As succeeding generations are wont to do, younger artists in the 1960s and 1970s broke from traditional forms and techniques and experimented with the medium. Both whimsical and conceptual ideas began to crop up in the works as is evidenced by Pat Hunt's pendant of 1972. The piece has a great sculptural quality, with fluid lines and contrasting textures. It also depicts, with accuracy, the remnants of a pork chop.

Furthermore, artists began to introduce alternative materials such as acrylic, bone, and fabric. A necklace created by Sandra Noble Goss with nineteen clear acrylic claw-like cylinders, is a good example of this trend.

Colour was the next element artists tackled. The 1980s saw a veritable explosion of hues in metalwork as people experimented with patinated and anodized metals as can be seen in the gentle gold and rose hues in Lyn Wiggins's brooch of 1988.

For the juried aspect of the show Boris Bally of Pittsburgh, Claudette Hard-Pilon of Montreal, and Wendy Shingler of Toronto had the unenviable task of narrowing the entries down to the forty-one included in this show. Some artists took the theme celebration literally while others continued to develop recent personal themes.

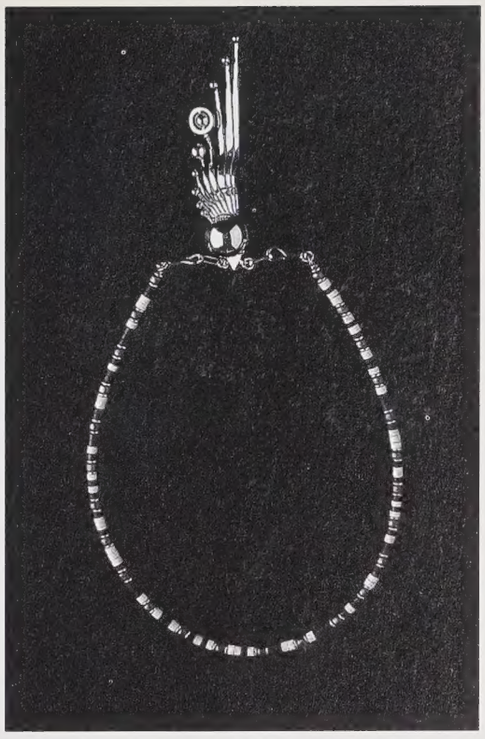
LEFT TO RIGHT

Sarabeth Carnat
Suffer for Beauty Series # 1,
(neckpiece), 1996
copper
construction,
CAD etching, photo etching
100 cm

Douglas Boyd
Cocktail Pitcher, 1957
sterling
22.6 x 6.3 cm

Britta Klingenstierna
Confetti Thrower, (ring), 1996
Sterling, copper, rhodonite, garnets
fabricated, cast
6 x 4 x 2.5 cm

David Reid
Orrery Pendant, (pendant/sundial),
Best of Show, 1996
sterling, bone, glass, fabricated
22.5 x 5 cm



Eric Leyland's vase is an interesting contrast to the early hollowware pieces of the guild. His fluid, shard-shaped vase fabricated in sterling is supported by three forged brass legs. The lines of the legs mirror the lines of the vase, while three set amethysts on its side bring balance to the piece.

Two works submitted by Faith Layard mark intriguing progressions in enameling. In *Sundance*, zigzagging lines of cloisonné are repeated in the triangular flecks of turquoise, coral, and gold. A silver attachment, with pierced repetitions of triangular shapes, brings balance to the piece. Layard's use of colour is even more refined in her large pendant, *Reservoir*. Cyan, amber, and green dance in a gentle rhythm against a brushed silver base.

A few artists brought serious conceptual themes to their pieces. Paul McClure's sombre works, *Lump in My Throat, Alveoli,* and *Heart* serve as reminders of the fragile miracle of life. In the richness of his pearls and oxidized silver the old tradition of memento mori takes on significance. While the unwearable jewellery of Beth Albers's *Bracelet?* focuses on the constrictions and restraints society imposes on individuals, especially women.

Perhaps the most festive entry in the show is the fabricated and cast ring by Britta Klingenstierna. In *The Confetti Thrower* a figure stands atop a mound of gleaming stones, poised to throw a pan full of sparkles. Made of sterling, rhodonite, and garnets, it is a playful and creative piece.

A functional and wearable object by David Reid won the Steel Trophy this year. In his *Orrery Pendant,* Reid perfected his sundial design and integrated the functional with the aesthetic to create a clock, sculpture, and necklace in one piece. The coloured beads of the necklace form a binary code which act as numbers, the pendant serves as a celestial guide.

Along with the jurors, Colleen McCallum, has to be commended on this *Celebration* exhibition. It ambitiously sought to encapsulate the past half century of Canadian metal art with vision and style. Let's hope we continue to heed the words of old Matsuo Basho.

Kathryn Hayward is a writer living in Toronto, Ontario.

Exhibition Venues

La Galerie Des Métiers D'art du Québec
Montréal, Québec, Canada
October 23 – November 30, 1997

Salon Des Métiers D'art du Québec
Montréal, Québec, Canada
December 4 – 21, 1997

National Ornamental Metal Museum
Memphis, Tennessee
February 8 – April 19, 1998
Februc

LEFT TO RIGHT

Steve C. Rosenberg
Va Va Voom

Marte Cellura
Mountain Scape

Greybeard's Garden of Earthly Delights

Highland Park Conservatory
Rochester, New York
July – September 1996

by William Baran-Mickle

Greybeard's Garden of Earthly Delights, curated by the National Ornamental Metals Museum was one of several exhibitions presented for the ABANA Conference held in June, 1996, in Alfred, New York. The impetus for the show was to exhibit work by veteran artists, thus the title: *Greybeard*. The works were not dictated by a specific client, subsequently a greater degree of personal expression in the process of blacksmithing was visible.

The variety of forms and techniques by thirteen artists created a wonderful overview of this field. The technical quality of the work was superb. Scott Lankton's *Garden Gate*, is an example of eloquent functional design that goes beyond the norm in its attention to detail and execution. Highly refined, the gate would merge very well with an outdoor environment. Though reminiscent of Gary Griffin's gate works, Lankton's *Garden Gate* includes more natural details, eschewing narrative.

One very unusual piece executed by Marte Cellura, *Mountain Scape*, is a six feet freestanding sculpture/fountain that blends the rock forms of traditional Chinese landscape painting with an eerie planetary landscape from "Star Trek". Unfortunately, this piece was newly constructed and it lacked the rich surface it will someday have when time, water, and oxygen have left their marks.

A piece maintaining an interesting balance between controlled technique and expressive potential is *Romeo*, by Joe Peloski. Peloski manufactured a split bloom part of which rises three feet straight up in an incremental taper that ends with a delicate floral detail. The other half curls gently and flares to the side revealing a heavily forged, lush, impasto texture.

Jim Wallace's *Bull* is a deceptively simple sculpture that incorporates elements of controlled beauty. At the top of a four feet taper, the head of a bull is shaped with subtle, astute plane shifts which create nose, neck, and horns. This work has a boldness and strength reminiscent of some of Picasso's works from the 1940s.

Va Va Voom, an out of the ordinary sculpture by Steve Rosenberg, is a double-sided, near life-size rendering of a female figure. It lies horizontally along the ground in a bikini with a hand supporting a head and a mass of swirling curls. Employing a funky, stylized approach, Rosenberg shows what is possible beyond the serious and seldom referential examples of iron work most people encounter as support or background structures to architecture and landscapes.

The local press aptly billed the show "jewels for the garden." Almost every turn revealed a new object, be it a bench, a birdbath, or an abstract sculpture. To the credit of the curators and sponsors, there were too many interesting works to discuss. Spread over seven venues, a wider than usual audience can see and come to appreciate the artistic possibilities iron working can provide.

William Baran-Mickle is a writer and metalsmith living in Rochester, New York.

Tom Madden
Defining Space

Wearley Studio Gallery
Royal Oak, Michigan
January 25 – March 29, 1997

by Nicole Jacquard

ABOVE
Untitled Vase #2, 1996
pewter, copper
11 x 7 x 7"

LEFT
Untitled Vase #4, 1996
pewter, copper
14 x 6 x 6"

I am interested in the complexities inherent to the vessel, interior verses exterior, transitions into and out of the structure, as well as stability, balance and utility. Tom Madden

Vessels...
It seems that traditional utilitarian metalsmithing exhibitions have fallen way to make room for controversial explorations into the meanings of contemporary adornment. The rich historical craft of hollowware is often overlooked. This is hard to believe considering my own education. Learning to manipulate metal through projects such as salt and pepper shakers, cups and saucers, vases, and even the all encompassing challenge of the teapot, were some of the most important lessons to absorb. It is refreshing to see a show that focuses on the deft tooling of hollowware.

Tom Madden is the Instructor/Acting Metal and Jewelry Section Chairman at the Center for Creative Studies in Detroit, Michigan. He has been working with metal for over twenty years. Madden's metalsmithing not only explores the realm of hollowware, but the adornment of the body as well. His latest work at the Wearley Studio Gallery, reflects the title *Defining Space*. Over ten pewter vases were on display from January 25 through March 29 1997.

This most recent work explores the interdependent nature of the vessel. The dialog evident as interior space expands against containment. This give and take creates the visual tension which animates both the structure and the space it occupies. Tom Madden

This attitude is most evident in the *Untitled Vase #4*, made of pewter and brightly colored, electroformed copper. The body of the vase is a stretched tower leading up to a flared top which appears to be being strangled by a copper twig around its neck. The neck of the vase is not completely closed letting the viewer see the strain being caused by the choking of the copper wire.

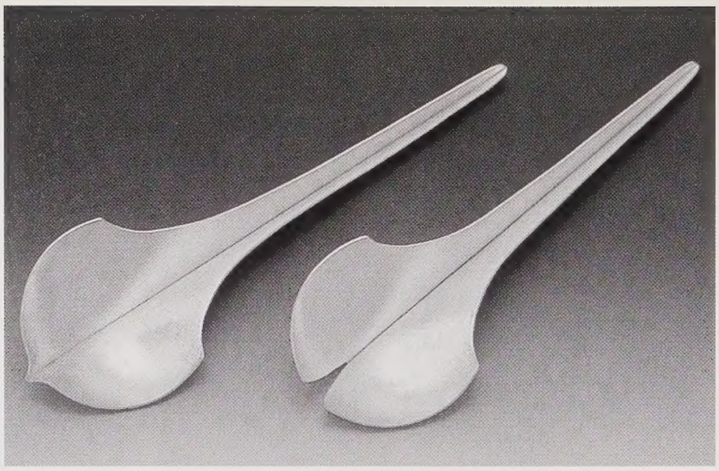
The vase is part of a series which ranges in size from basket-like forms of eighteen inches tall to small intimate vases of five inches. The surface treatment is sanded or matted, allowing the viewer to concentrate on the overall-form. The vessels all have a familiar quality: plant and animal forms, figural references, as well as what appears to be animated gestures. Like elegant origami, all of the pieces look as if they were simply folded pieces of metal. *Untitled Vase #12* references not only flower forms, but shells and birds. The three top flutes appear to be growing from the base allowing their wing-like forms to stretch. Their animated, skillfully crafted illusion draws the viewer to peer into the vessel to reveal its contents. Looking inside the vessel reveals a protrusion, a pyramid form, extruded from the vase's three pointed base.

What captivates my attention within these forms is the sense that the structure is in transition: growth, decay, expansion, and contraction. Tom Madden

Untitled Vase #2, which measures eleven by seven inches, looks like a magnified dissection of a seed. Three gentle bumps create a pillowing effect on the top of the vase. Tension is created by vertical cracks appearing to break the three pods apart. The trio of forms is held together by tiny horizontal copper bands, which encourage the viewer to look inside.

Defining Space was a show worth seeing. Madden's sculptural approach to working within the limitations of the vessel, encourage the viewer to investigate the entire form. The work was not about social, economic, or political statements. It did not need to be. It was about the metalsmithing tradition in a contemporary context, the functional and the practical, creating an object, skillfully executing an idea, and mastering the metal. This is a part of the tradition that cannot be overlooked or emphasized enough.

Nicole Jacquard is an artist and International correspondent, living and working in Rochester, Michigan.



Cynthia Eid
Undulations: Hammered Metalworks

DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Garden
Lincoln, Massachusetts
March 28 – May 4, 1997

by Jane Port

Cynthia Eid currently teaches advanced silversmithing at the DeCordova Museum School. She began as a student of Alma Eikerman at Indiana University in the late 1970s. This exhibition of functional metalwork includes neckrings, vessels, tableware, and ecclesiastical ware made from 1990 to 1997. The works adhere to a modernist aesthetic of pared abstract forms Many of the objects are articulated by a quiet, sinuous line derived from the natural world.

Eid's richly patinated copper oil lamps *Sea-ish X* and *Molluscan Lights* resemble weathered stones found along the seashore, but the crevice-like opening for the wick is reminiscent of a bilvalve's inlet. Similarly, the inner curve of the neckring, *Slither,* neatly duplicates in silver the curling form of a reptile or vine; it looks as if it would slide comfortably around a woman's neck as well. *Sea-ish VI,* a sterling silver scent container, seems to rest its undulating horizontal body solidly like an ancient fossil on the bottom of the sea, its quartz crystal cap appearing to have grown on the spot. Sure in approach and unerring in execution, Eid's works are fluid and natural, belying the force of the hammer.

Several of the ecclesiastical works in the exhibit deviate from Eid's sensuous curving line. Perched atop a brass tripod, *Balance* and *Balance II* are angular, cone-shaped pewter cups for Elijah. Although particularly appropriate for a religious offering, drinking from a triangle might be a challenge. Other objects combine straight lines with curving shapes. The sterling seder plate *Veins II* is rounded and edged with a kind of shirring. A somewhat looser version of the tightly gathered edge also undulates at the upper rim of a curving, asymmetrical silver vase.

The exhibition was mounted in wall cases and freestanding vitrines among the tables of a small white-walled dining room near the museum's retail shop. Photographs of the artist at work with explanatory labels added to the viewer's experience of the works' conception and development. In a statement, Eid explained that though she "enjoys stretching limits of convention for utilitarian objects"; the objects must function well. Like Matisse, she hopes her work will find a home in someone's living or working space and "offer a moment's respite from the hectic world."

Eid is currently exploring repoussé combined with patination and an engaging series of her design experiments on small copper disks is mounted at the end of the exhibit. It will be interesting to see how future works incorporate these new ideas that seem to indicate a growing interest in surface.

Jane Port is a writer living in Wellesley, Massachusetts.

ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT

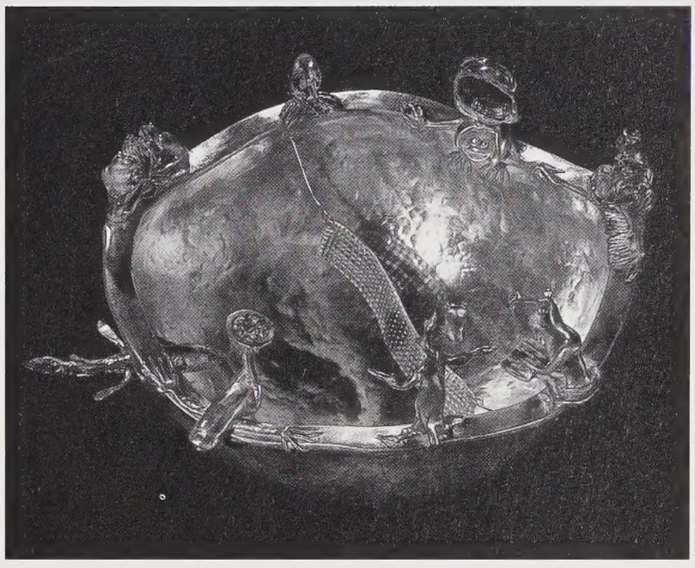
Folded Servers, 1996
sterling
8 x 2 x 1"

Biophor, (vase), 1995
sterling
9 x 3 x 1¼"

American Masters of Hollowware in the Late 20th Century

Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia
Athens, Georgia
April 5 – June 15, 1997

by Jim Buonaccorsi and LeeAnn Mitchell



Phillip Fike
Bowl, 1990
fine silver, fine gold
7 x 7 x 6"

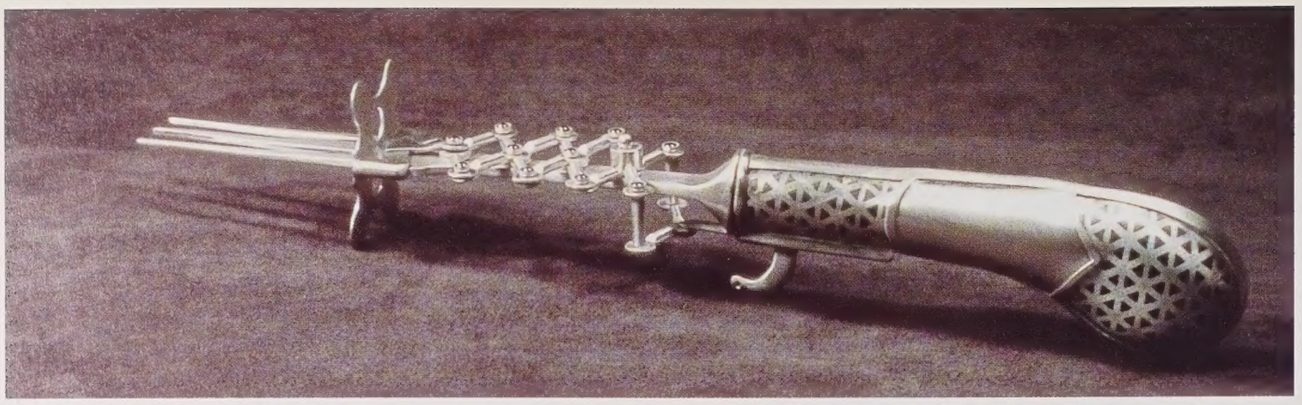
Upon being asked to write about the exhibition without having seen the work, we both had the stereotypical response that this was going to be a strictly formal exhibition. Upon entering the Martha and Eugene Odum Gallery within the Georgia Museum of Art we were delighted to find a variety of images infused with not only exemplary craft but with thought provoking conceptual avenues for viewers to traverse. *American Masters of Hollowware in the Late 20th Century* is a powerful exhibition that addresses the wide range of approaches being taken in contemporary hollowware. Co-curated by Deborah Landon and Gary Noffke, the exhibition includes the work of Chunghi Choo, Marilyn da Silva, Fred Fenster, Phillip Fike, Marvin Jensen, Curtis LaFollette, John Marshall, Kurt Matzdorf, Gary Noffke, Lisa Norton, David Pimentel, John Prip, Elliot Pujol, Heikki Seppä, and Helen Shirk.

The work ranges from the conceptual to the formal, utilizing both traditional and non-traditional techniques in the manipulation of materials that range from silver, gold, copper, and pewter to steel, collage, and colored pencil. This eclecticism sets the pace for the exhibition. Only a few objects focus on the strictly functional, with the majority of the works focusing on form, surface, and the conceptual/historical idea of function. On the label's media line for Heikki Seppä's *Delphinium*, 1982, appears "sterling silver with tessellation." What a perfect word to describe the careful juxtaposition of elements, in this case artists, that the curators formed into a coherent exhibition. Landon and Noffke did an exceptional job of exposing the audience to a plethora of ideas, styles, and techniques. Gary Noffke acted initially as a curator without considering his own work for the exhibition. He posed the question to himself, "who would I want to show with?" This self-absorbed position provided the perfect approach. (Gary's work was added at the request of the director.) While it was not possible to include all of the people that have brought attention to the world of hollowware, Noffke and Landon wanted to produce an exhibition that "covered a number of people that have made major contributions to the field." They succeeded.

The exhibition is full of contrast. Elliot Pujol's luscious copper and gold leaf bowls play nicely against Curtis LaFollette's *construct* approach to tea sets. Marilyn da Silva's subtle tonality offsets Helen Shirk's exploration of vibrant colors. But the notion of contrast is most apparent in the work of Lisa Norton and Phillip Fike. Norton's *Something to Talk About*, 1987, is a tongue and cheek comment on the field of hollowware. Stamped and engraved on both sides of a beautiful and functional steel bucket is the following: "Something to think about / Real solid / Yet full of empty rhetoric/ A criterion is a standard against which other things are measured/ They were necessities they have become luxuries / And ever since everything has been ok." Set behind the steel bucket is a photographic collage of a Styrofoam cup with the words Dictating Equipment. The point is made.

Something to Talk About proves the perfect opposite to Phillip Fike's *Bowl*, 1990. The bowl, formed and cast of fine silver and fine gold, is a gleeful exploration of a day at the pond. On the rim of the vessel is an array of silver frogs enjoying the day; a couple with a gold baby frog in hand, one frog reading, one frog playing a tune, and a pair of frogs playing patty cake as a wise old gold owl watches the proceedings from his perch in a silver tree. The bottom of the bowl has a fish piercing the bowl with a gold sports net resting gently above the imaginary water that Fike makes us see through his masterful use of metal. Fike, who presented the Ann Orr Morris Memorial lecture in conjunction with the opening of the exhibition, spoke of his history with metal and his life's work, "I do know that I vibrated early with metalwork, it was happy from day one and has stayed that way ever since." It becomes obvious from spending time with *American Masters of Hollowware in the Late 20th Century* that the artists in the exhibition affirm Fike's belief.

Jim Buonaccorsi and LeeAnn Mitchell are writers who live in Farmington, Georgia.



Society For Midwest Metalsmiths At the Table

St. Louis Artists' Guild
St. Louis, Missouri
November 24, 1996 – January 8, 1997

by Noel Leicht

At the Table, an exhibition of metalwork sponsored by the Society for Midwest Metalsmiths, was held during the holiday season at the St. Louis Artists' Guild. The forty-six pieces chosen by juror Chuck Evans, Professor of Jewelry and Metalsmithing at Iowa State University, for the Society's first show constituted a large and diverse selection of work from artists practicing in the heartland. Typical of most guild shows, the craftspersonship of the work varied greatly, reflecting a wide range of skill levels among participating members' entries.

Objects ranged from the expected tableware utensils and vessels to a variety of pieces that stretched the imagination. These included items that could be worn or displayed on a table and objects depicting images of edibles. The makers of these objects intentionally defied boundaries and sought innovative methods to create unusual and provocative pieces.

Several of the artists chose to bring humor to the table with creations that reached beyond the functional to the narrative. Both entries from Melinda Hodge were worthy of applause and appreciative smiles. Her pewter, red brass, and steel *Chinese Carryout* is a lifesize carton of fortune cookies; in the cynical *Product of USA*, she fabricated a half-opened sardine can filled with cast toy soldiers. The rolled married metals lid depicts the American flag with crosses in place of the stars and makes a strong antiwar statement.

Handsomely designed and beautifully executed for functional use was the *Pivotal Salad Serving Set* by Gina Westergard. Each serving utensil contains a curved hinged flap cleverly placed to enhance the size of the scoops and to prevent small ingredients from falling out the sides. Sleek and elegant, the design could hold its own with contemporary flatware displayed in galleries or design boutiques on New York City's Madison Avenue.

Notable among the functional pieces was Dayne Sislen's *Mind Your Manners* meat fork, reminiscent of a Victorian gadget used to push meat off the tines of a fork. The complicated apparatus connected a riveted spring device to a bean-shaped trigger integrated into a married metal pistol grip handle. This utensil needed to be manipulated in order for one to fully appreciate its playfulness and its craftspersonship.

FAR LEFT
Dayne Silsen
Mind Your Manners, (buffet fork)
sterling, shi buchi, hematite

LEFT
Melinda Hodge
Product of USA, (Sardine Can)
silver, cast bronze, copper, red brass, resin

ABOVE LEFT
Gina Westergard
Pivotal Salad Serving Set, 1995
sterling

ABOVE RIGHT
Lin Stanionis
Serving Spoons
sterling, micarta, lacquers

Sculptural spoons were represented by Susan Bostwich's bean handled *Relics of a Summer Garden* which incorporated tiny sweet-pea-shaped scoops. Lin Stanionis's sensuous clitoral-like teaspoons were subtly highlighted by micarta and lacquered handles. Ellie Kaufman brought whimsy to the table with her stork-in-a-birdhouse handled sugar spoon with a hinged door. Sarah Perkins showed off her adeptness in enameling with three entries that featured flowing cobalt blue and white patterns on elegantly simple shaped spoons and vessels. Overall, the spoon entries exhibited the greatest diversity in materials and theme interpretation.

The most unique vessels were Lee Peck's highly patterned camel and palm tree bowls fabricated from copper and white and black nickel. The elaborate designs were densely arranged and highlighted by the rich contrast created by liver of sulfur patinas. Louise Rawl's *A Closer Look at the Moon* aluminum bowl was stunning in its elegant simplicity; while Paulette Meyers's *Spiritress Eternal: Power Vessel* combined a variety of more complicated techniques (kumboo, stone setting, patination, raising, and stretching) to achieve a totally different kind of elegance and simplicity. Helen Blythel-Hart's *Stegasaurus Cream and Sugar Set* added a whimsical touch to the hollowware entries in the exhibition; Razine Wenneker's woven wire vessel illustrated how basketry techniques can be integrated into the metalworking vocabulary.

Standing in a class all their own were Mike Gleason's elaborately fabricated tower constructions, *Sensorama* and *Empty Reliquary.* These labor intensive objects with their layers of materials and plethora of planes and rivets created visual feasts for the eyes that reflected the personality of a very detail oriented craftsperson.

Debbie LaFara showed off with an elegant sterling evening bag, *Dutch Dinner,* hung by a sixty inch fine silver hand woven chain. The cigarette box like construction featured neat side button latches to close the bag. LaFara's *Round Table Discussion* bracelet of reticulated silver hollow forms set with a variety of precious stones illustrated her tedious craftspersonship and eye for fashion design.

The show, thoughtfully although densely displayed, garnered enthusiastic comments from St. Louis viewers delighted by the uniqueness of the items they saw. Exhibiting this work in a facility known mainly for its painting and drawing shows introduced metalsmithing to a new audience, many of whom got a first time view of not only the skill of area craftspeople, but also the playfulness and thoughtfulness these artists express.

Noel Leicht is a St. Louis based metalsmith and writer.

Design 1885-1945: The Arts of Reform and Persuasion/Selections from the Wolfsonian

Seattle Art Museum
Seattle, Washington
October 24, 1996 – January 21, 1997

Carnegie Museum of Art
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
February 22 – May 18, 1997

by Matthew Kangas

The point of view that this massive exhibition of decorative and design objects from the period 1885-1945 offers is definitely contextual. How did handmade and mass-produced objects made of wood, glass, cloth, ceramic, and metals – not to mention plastic and fiberglass – express prevailing or nascent ideologies and cultures?

Sidestepping aesthetic analyses, curator Wendy Kaplan and her team for *Design 1885-1945: The Arts of Reform and Persuasion/ Selections from the Wolfsonian* undertook a vast culling process, choosing 280 paintings, sculptures, furniture, ceramics, metalwork, and posters out of the 60,000 American and European artifacts in storage at the Wolfsonian Foundation Research Center in Miami Beach, Florida. The results are impressive and as reliable a profile of mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth-century design as we are likely to see for a long time.

Given the extravagant results of Mitchell Wolfson Jr.'s collectormania, Kaplan's approach was shrewd and built upon the adept organizational skills demonstrated in an earlier project, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts' *The Art That is Life: The Arts and Crafts Movement in America.*

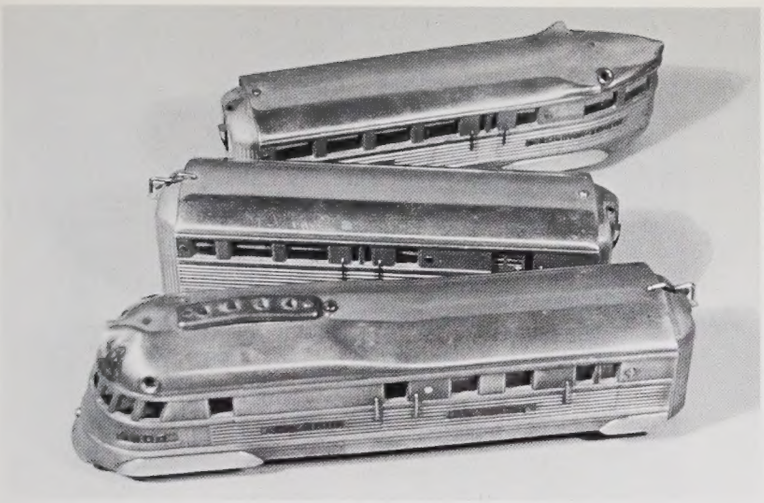
Sticking to metals alone for the purposes of this review, *Design 1885-1945* is nearly an embarrassment of riches. With the survey distributed into three separate categories (Confronting Modernity, Celebrating Modernity, and Manipulating Modernity), Kaplan and Company demonstrate how central objects wrought of silver, gold, steel, aluminum, nickel, copper, bronze, brass, and iron were to furnishing domestic and public environments and how, in an age of changing ideologies and taste, the very choice of metals was expressive of class, power, and politics.

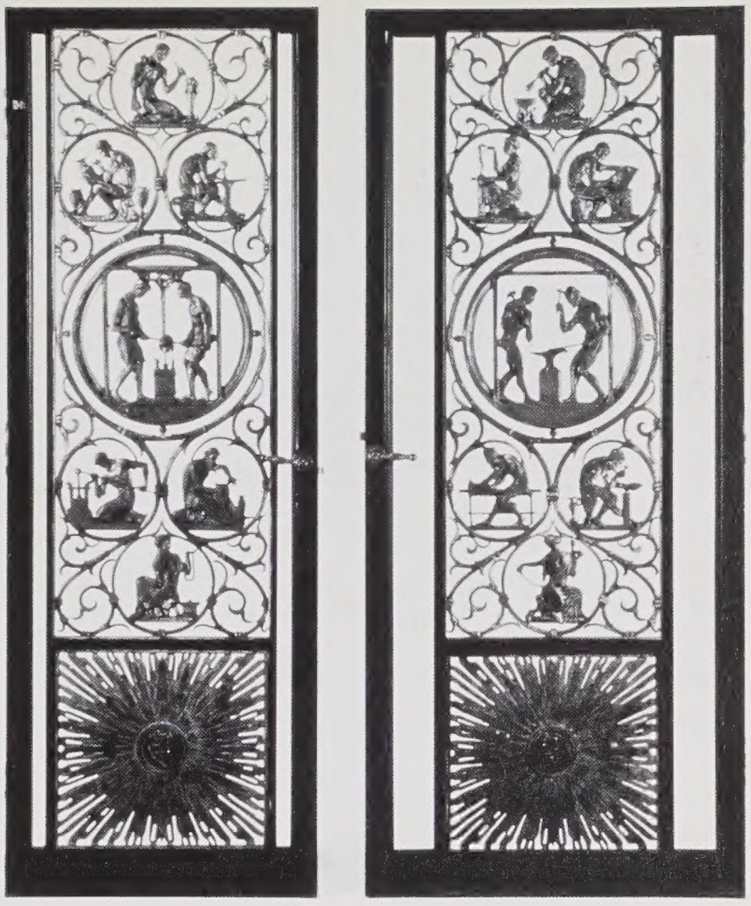
For example, after Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia, the League of Nations imposed strict economic sanctions on Italy. All of a sudden, aluminum (which could be produced with all Italian resources) became a crucial, politically correct building material for the fascist-state industries' use. In 1938, Gio Ponti designed the corporate headquarters of Montecatini, the nation's largest producer of aluminum, and included beautiful desks of aluminum and Fiberglas.

Within the various sections, Kaplan sets out to show how both private and public spheres of design reflected the anxieties and subsequent embrace of new styles and ideas about the changing worlds of Western Europe and the United States. From ornate, elite gold-and-silver centerpieces made for the Prince of Belgium to severe tableware on board the Art Deco S.S. Normandie, the show itself is like an ocean cruise through history: calm, rocky, luxurious, and sick inducing. America's role as the eventual hometown for modern design is evident, too, considering both the size of the market and the fact that it became the eventual haven for European designers in exile.

Among the most striking and intricately worked items are the silver-electroplated-on-iron ceremonial doors, *Allegories of Art and Industry*, c. 1925, designed by Oscar Bach and the wrought-iron gate made the same year by Alessandro Mazucotelli. The absence of Philadelphia metalsmith and architectural gate designer Samuel Yellin is regrettable.

Other treasures from high style to worker's style include a *Gorham Tea Caddy with Lid*, 1881, with hammered depressions, a chased silver platter by Englishman Gilbert Marks made in 1896, and a simple Colonial Revival coffee service by Porter George Blanchard, 1935, along with a Burlington Zephyr toy train set of





aluminum, 1934. An 1889 French sculpture, *The Glory of Iron*, by Waagen depicts two ironworkers atop the base of the Eiffel Tower under construction. The French were so eager to celebrate the tower as a symbol of modernity, they literally couldn't wait for it to be completed before creating expensive souvenirs.

With such a catchall approach, any objections of tasteful versus tacky are avoided yet it is impossible not to carp a bit about how ugly the late nineteenth-century German and Belgian pieces often were before Modernity really prevailed, or how terrifying and revolting the results of Nazi and Fascist-sponsored propaganda decorative arts efforts were. Viewers really gulp when seeing porcelain figures of Hitler Youth created by concentration camp labor, or even some of the 1939 New York World's Fair creations of steel and aluminum.

Toward the end of the exhibition, there is a sense that by 1945 the idealistic utopianism of early modern design had become corrupted by politics and commercialism. Still, considering what came after World War II – the triumphant American cultural of consensus in the bland 1950s – *Design 1885-1945* has a poignant, nostalgic flavor to it, so distant in time does that period now seem. Next up, the Wolfsonian plans a survey of the following period, 1945-1975. I can hardly wait to see an Albert Paley necklace next to a piece of Kenneth Jay Lane jewelry that Jackie O. once (might have) worn. Now there's cultural context!

Matthew Kangas, art critic and independent curator, wrote the recent Expressions in Wood: Masterworks from The Wornick Collection *(Oakland Museum and University of Washington Press).*

ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT

Attributed to Porter George Blanchard
Coffee Service, c. 1935-40
silver, ivory, bakelite
top: 10¼ x 9¼ x 5¾"
left: 3¼ x 8⅝ x 6"
right: 3⅛ x 5¾" diam.

American Flyer, Chicago, IL
Burlington Zephyr, 1934
cast aluminum, sheet steel, brass, acetate
top: 3½ x 2¾ x 12"
middle: 3 x 2¾ x 10"
bottom: 3 x 2¾ x 10¾"

Oscar Bruno Bach
Allegories of Art & Industry, (doors) c. 1925
silver electroplate on copper, painted cast iron
left: 80¼ x 29¼ x 4¼"
right: 80¼ x 35¼ x 4"

LEFT TO RIGHT

Wetland
copper
7 x 4"

Twilight Glyph
pewter, sterling
7 x 11"

Illuminated Vessels
Metal Work by Agnes Chwae

Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters
Madison, Wisconsin
December 3 – 30, 1996

by Katherine K. Rogers

"'Tis a gift to be simple," the Shaker hymn proclaims, and the poetic simplicity of Agnes Chwae's hollowware work truly is a gift. Far from simplistic, though, these copper, pewter, and silver bowls and candleholders honor the artist's reverence for nature and her artistic ancestry.

Chwae describes herself as a "cultural surfer," but I prefer the metaphor a "cultural fisher." Casting her net deeply into the sea of time, she lifts it into the present moment, laden with ancient artifacts and natural treasures. Reinterpreting these offerings in a contemporary context, Chwae crosses the centuries in ways that reveal her respect for process as well as theme. There is about these works a quality of quiet discovery – as of pausing in wonder at a sparkling brook or brushing the sand from some shard of the past.

Chwae's delicate *Wetland* sculpture conveys this sense of found offering most directly. Here rusty, reedlike fingers of forged and hammered wire raise a tiny bowl, like a gift from the earth: a miniature sacred font. Literally buried and unearthed in its process of creation, the bowl was treated with a sawdust patina to produce a roughened, aged effect.

More contemporary in style, the pewter *Riverbed* offers a kind of transcendentalist ode to earth and water. Three cast stones support and gently protrude through a curved, satin-finished plate incised with thin lines dancing like ripples on a pond. Lit from above, this pond plate casts shadows pierced by strands of light, repeating the stippled line dance in reverse.

Water-worn rocks in a New Foundland riverbed inspired Chwae to create *Rock and Water*, as well as the *Riverbed* piece. In this visual haiku, the artist has molded a cast rock into a pewter double-bowl construction. The interior of this breath-taking vessel glimmers like sunlight on streaming water. Encasing this inner world, the bowl's exterior records the rough texture of the stone Chwae pounded against its surface wall.

Chwae is frequently inspired by excursions into nature, including bird-watching trips with her husband, but visits to other cultures and an interest in history and anthropology also inform her work. The metal dots adorning the rim of *Aziyade*, for example, and the bowl's undulating rusty-green surface recall Byzantine jewelry and the weathered walls and domes Chwae found so fascinating on a recent trip to Turkey. Titled after Pierre Loti's tale of a harem girl's forbidden romance with a French naval officer, Chwae's *Aziyade* evokes the exotic atmosphere of an evening in old Istanbul.

Night and *Twilight Glyph*, two pewter and silver bowls, borrow the twilight motif of a half-closed eye, recorded in the *Codex Mendoza*, a sixteenth century Aztec painted manuscript. In regal homage to the evening sky, Chwae has perched her satiny *Twilight* bowl on a crownlike stand, encircled at its base with the sleepy-eyed glyphs. Two pairs of the half-closed eye shapes also rest dreamily on the edge of *Night*. The bowl's interior shimmers like a full moon within the darker, planished exterior, highlighted to suggest a starlit sky.

Chwae's copper *Codex Mendoza* bowl blends Aztec and Chinese design motifs. Like the opening in a Chinese medallion, the disk at the bowl's base suggests an entry into heaven. Round and rectangular spirals, worked in deep relief, whirl around the bowl's rusty-patinated sides, conjuring visions of Aztec empires and spinning galaxies.

A native of South Korea, Chwae moved to Wisconsin at the age of ten. Straddling two cultures, Chwae says she does not fully identify with either, but considers herself an observer of both. In her copper *American Toad* bowl, she mixes East and West with wry humor. Here tadpole shapes and the American toad's webbed footprints track across the earthy interior of another double-bowl construction. Echoing traditional Chinese vessel shapes, the inner bowl is layered with blue and brown patinas, while the darkly mottled exterior was treated with a sawdust patina. Imbedded in this murky realm, the fossil-like imprints suggest a trek through time – and mud as well.

Chwae's pewter vessel, in the form of a Korean rice washing bowl, is modeled after a fourteenth century wooden rice washing bowl which she saw at the Korean Folklore Museum on a trip to Seoul. As clean and simple as a Bauhaus piece, the bowl's design incorporates an outer ridge, originally devised as a handle, while the parallel lines incised inside were meant to help in hulling rice.

Perhaps it is the blend of physical, emotional, intellectual, and intuitive awareness that makes these works so satisfying; and Chwae's elegant *Four Elements* piece expresses this sense of wholeness most succinctly. Widening dramatically from its narrow base, the blue-green patinated bowl seems to float like a lotus upon still water. Four raised indentations in the rim mark the four directions, while four groups of linear markings, chased into the sides, make direct reference to Oriental philosophy and mysticism. Associated with the *I Ching* and depicted on the South Korean flag, these markings represent heaven and earth, fire and water. They remind us of the importance of balancing opposites and finding the unity underlying all duality.

With a spirit of quiet fire and natural flow, Agnes Chwae has blessed us with works of harmony and grace. Simple, but not easy – gifts to be grateful for whenever they are brought forth.

Katherine Rogers is a painter and free-lance writer who resides near Madison in Waunakee, Wisconsin.

LEFT TO RIGHT

Brooch
enamel and 24k on etched copper, sterling silver, turquoise, 3⅝ x ⅝"

Brooch
enamel on etched copper, 18k, sterling silver, blue agate, 2½ x 1⅞"

Brooch
enamel and 24k on etched copper, 18k, sterling silver, tiger eye, 4 x ¾"

Rebekah Laskin

Aaron Faber Gallery
New York, New York
December 5, 1996 – January 4, 1997

Review by Marjorie Simon

The more time spent with Rebekah Laskin's fifty new enameled pieces the better, for they don't give up their secrets easily. Exquisite craftsmanship and mechanics are the foundations on which Laskin builds her signature concerns of form (the exquisite edge), surface (etched and then enameled), dead-on color choices, and a pervading sense of mystery. But whereas her last big collection projected a dark vision spiraling to a place from which escape seemed unlikely, this one is sunnier, more like a richly textured dream than a nightmare.

More than a third of the pieces are earrings of bold, crude shapes in precious materials. They are all about jewelry. One might be tempted to pass by the few circular cloisonné pendants with their motif of pure design; however, lacking the intensity of the others, they provide a sort of visual resting place so that one can draw breath before continuing on with the brooches that form the backbone of the collection.

One group of long pins appears related to Laskin's arrowhead, or knife-blade forms of the 1980s. Seen as silhouettes, they look like parapets, but as negative space they become narrow spaces, interstices between buildings where the sun enters only at the solstice. All of the pins are topped with stones that perfectly complete their composition. But by using the pedestrian onyx and turquoise, for example, Laskin insures that they have the same *concurrent nobility* as the enamel. A few are raised up on little stalks like a crustacean's eyes; others sit flush with the edge of the form. One pair of marquis-shaped blue agates sits atop an undulating figure, as if Picasso visited the harem and drew a veil of velvet over the women.

A second group of pins, square also topped with stones, recalls a western mesa; one is even shaded from pink to purple as if silhouetted in lengthening rays of the setting sun. Based on dozens of drawings of a large piece of fallen slate grounded by its own gravity and solidity, these compositions are like collages, with lines and elements, layers of meaning, and layers of glass.

Beginning with a deeply etched surface for texture, Laskin lays down color, stoning some off, working back into it as it takes on its own identity, ending with a sensual underfired surface embellished with runic threads and chips of color. The result is a barely contained composition suggesting etched concrete or steel, as organic as an old can or weathered shard of metal, its surface distressed. All the pins have a whiff of antiquity, this series looks old; one piece suggested the fractures of frost on a winter window, or a fern fossil trapped in eons of slate.

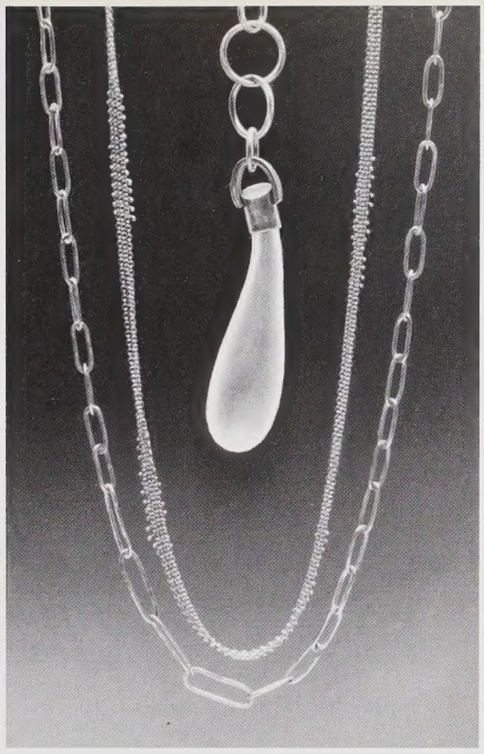
Because Laskin imbues each piece with the critical element of struggle, the refined and edited version we see reflects its tenuous journey into life. Because of her love of process, we are invited to share an intimate space with a mature artist reflecting on the mystery of life.

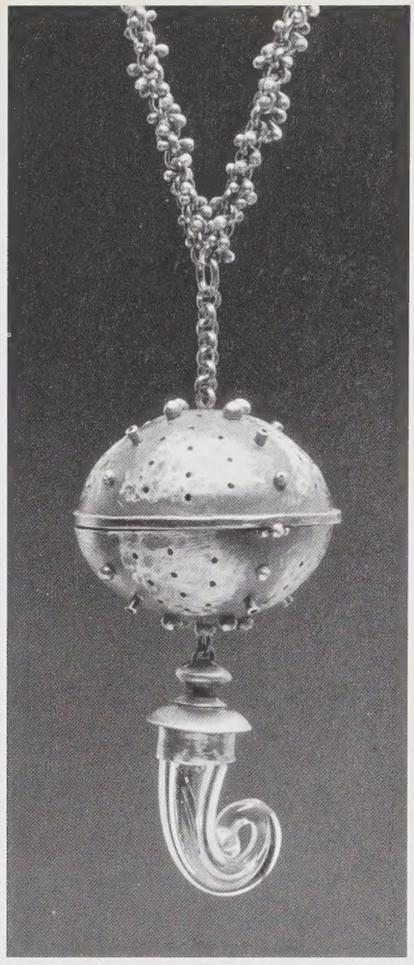
Marjorie Simon is a metalsmith, teacher, and writer who resides in Highland Park, New Jersey.

LEFT
Accessible, 1997
sterling silver, stone-cut glass
chains: 16, 30, 38"

RIGHT
Grand Opening, 1997
sterling silver, blown glass
neckpiece: 4 x 2"
chain: 32"

Photographs by Doug Yapel





Karen Gilbert
Material For Reasoning

Susan Cummins Gallery
Mill Valley, California
May 5 – 31, 1997

by Charlene M. Modena

With *The Silvered Chasm*, 1926, Magritte introduced a mysterious, iconic device into his painting. This was the grelot, a spherical harness bell with a slit opening that went on to become a recurrent theme. The first time I saw it in *The Voice of the Air*, 1928, I was startled when, for a second, I could hear the sound a group of grelot made as they floated through space, so strong was their presence.

I mention this because I had a similar experience while looking at Karen Gilbert's work on display at Susan Cummins Gallery. I know this is a presumptuous comparison, but there is an auditory aliveness to Gilbert's work that momentarily translates the forms to sound. Dark patinas, glyph-like detailing, rich textures, and sensuous shapes all create visual music. Wonderfully alchemical and hermetic, the work shown includes pendants, necklaces, bracelets, and brooches.

Delicate, textured, blown glass teardrops, cones, and tubes become vessels filled with minuscule shards. In combination with sterling silver and rusted steel the hand blown glass has become a signature of Karen Gilbert's work. The new work, which includes two necklaces with pendants, the interchangeable, three chain *Accessible*, and the spherical container/pendant *Grand Opening* join metal and glass in a fresh and compelling way. Also new are the spikey, rhythmical, glass cones of the necklace *Delay*, and the curiously seductive *Old Accurance*, a large brooch of sinuous glass, with a sterling dome surrounded by spicules of horse hair.

The new work continues to exhibit a lucid examination of conceptual, visual, and structural strength, as well as the disciplined eye of the designer. The result is an ability to create work which succeeds in being both contemporary and magically ritualistic.

None of these qualities sacrifice wearability, as Gilbert sees the body as the appropriate and elegant holder of her ideas. To honor this, I was told, she wears her jewelry around her studio before sending it out to galleries; a mixture of ritual and quality control.

Karen Gilbert is an intelligent artist whose work is the product of thought and insight before production. Her work will not stand still, because once the forms and ideas become too easy or too mechanical she will change and move on.

Charlene M. Modena is a writer who lives in Muir Beach, California.

A/K/A: 92
Ann Parkin, Marjorie Simon, and Susan Sloan

Works on paper by Allison Howard-Levy

OXOXO Gallery
Baltimore, Maryland
March 1 – 31

ABOVE
Ann Parkin
Necklace
sterling

RIGHT
Marjorie Simon
Hand Mirror III

by J. Susan Isaacs

A recent exhibition at the OXOXO Gallery in Baltimore demonstrates the sophisticated metalwork of the three jewelers that make up the group called *A/K/A: 92;* a fourth member displayed color etchings. Ann Parkin, Marjorie Simon, Susan Sloan, and Allison Howard-Levy, have exhibited together since meeting while studying under Bob Ebendorf at the 92nd Street Y in New York City, an organization long known for its commitment to the arts, especially metalwork.

A/K/A: 92 convenes regularly to offer support and plan exhibitions. They frequently invite regional craft artists to join them in order to stimulate ideas and maintain a high level of professional exchange. The OXOXO exhibition can be examined both as a representation of a group aesthetic and as individual expressions.

Though the term craftspersonship is often overused, it accurately describes this body of work. Although their individual approaches differ dramatically, their excellence and sophistication in technique and design draw the four together as a group. Howard-Levy's color etchings recall jewelry designs, so while she does not exhibit metalwork, her forms and color relate quite well to the work of the other three artists.

All of the metal artists engage the viewer aesthetically and intrigue the viewer intellectually. Certainly the most powerful level of response, the one most sought by each artist, is that of emotion. The viewer should want to study, hold, and ultimately wear each piece. Even more compelling with this body of work is understanding how the artist fabricated each piece.

Ann Parkin creates jewelry objects – earrings, pendants, and pins-constructed completely of sterling. Of the three jewelers, her work is the simplest in design and the most contained. Small in scale, her pieces depend in part for their completeness on their relationship to the wearer. Parkin's shapes are reductive, her surfaces a contrast of smooth outer shell and articulated inner planes. Her work is intimately connected to modernist ideas of good design: bold, simple compositions expressed through a sparse contemporary language.

While Parkin's forms are reductive and connected to geometry, the artist also contrasts textures, building up interior surfaces with articulations of thin curving linear patterns. These designs connect to the organic spirals of nature and the artist recounts in a statement that she finds her imagery in nuclear physics where visual records show tracks left by subatomic particles as they pass through bubble and cloud chambers. Parkin looks to craft as a vehicle to symbolize the visual metaphors of society and believes that art can be an expression of the underlying patterns of the natural order, closely connecting art and science.

THIS PAGE, LEFT TO RIGHT

Susan Sloan
Brooch VII
sterling, copper, epoxy resin with pigment, orange druzy, 3 x 2¼"

Susan Sloan
#5 Shell Brooch
sterling , epoxy resin with pigments, shell

Marjorie Simon
Bird Head Amphora (Captive), (necklace)
copper, sterling , gesso, oil stick

Marjorie Simon's pieces also depend upon an interest in contrast. However, she achieves this not through a single material and color, as in the case of Parkin, but through an amalgam of textures, mixing different materials and hues. Simon concentrates her efforts on brooches and pendants that allude to objects from the past, specifically, articles of ritual and magic. She uses silver, gold, copper, enamel, found objects, and semiprecious stones to create wearable objects that are at once modern and antique. Her brooches refer in their designs to ritual staffs of pre-industrial societies and to decorative objects of the ancient world, such as hand mirrors from ancient Rome. Their irregular forms and contrasting materials, especially the sometimes partially unfinished semiprecious stones, contribute to the connections to a long ago past when myth was given as equal importance as rational thought.

In several of the hand-mirror pieces, Simon creates textures in the handles through roll printing and creates the mirrorlike element from an irregularly shaped, semiprecious material like garnet or chalcopyrite. The shapes are organic, sensuously curving and joining to form a united whole. Her pendants refer to ancient amphoras and some are even shaped like a bird's head – a symbol found in many ancient images and writings.

Susan Sloan works in epoxy in a style that indicates an understanding of paint and pigments as well as metals. She layers the epoxy, incorporating pigments, gold leaf, and tissue papers onto organic forms, with the final piece often resembling abstract, color-field paintings. Sloan adds semiprecious stones and metals as well, creating an abstract collage/assemblage. It is not surprising to learn that she was first trained in two-dimensional art. The epoxy shapes cover a sterling support, with additional attachments of silver and other metals as well as semiprecious stones. The backs are finished elegantly and in one instance a cutout on the back reveals the beauty of a shell from that side as well.

Sloan's pieces are somewhat large (brooches measuring 3 x 2¼") yet unexpectedly light in weight. She applies the epoxy resin in layers allowing each to cure before the next is added. The epoxy gives the artist the luxury of working on a larger scale. Her work, like that of the previous two artists, also connects to nature. The irregular outlines of her pieces recall the forms of the earth, while the colors range from earth tones to the greens of the forest and the blues of the sky and sea.

Although there are obvious stylistic differences between the three jewelers, their interest in sophisticated compositions and excellent craftsmanship connect them and their work. *A/K/A: 92* represents three very distinct voices each of which demonstrates a high degree of technical knowledge and competency as well as a unique and aesthetic point of view.

J. Susan Isaacs is an Assistant Professor of Art History at Towson State University in Baltimore, Maryland.

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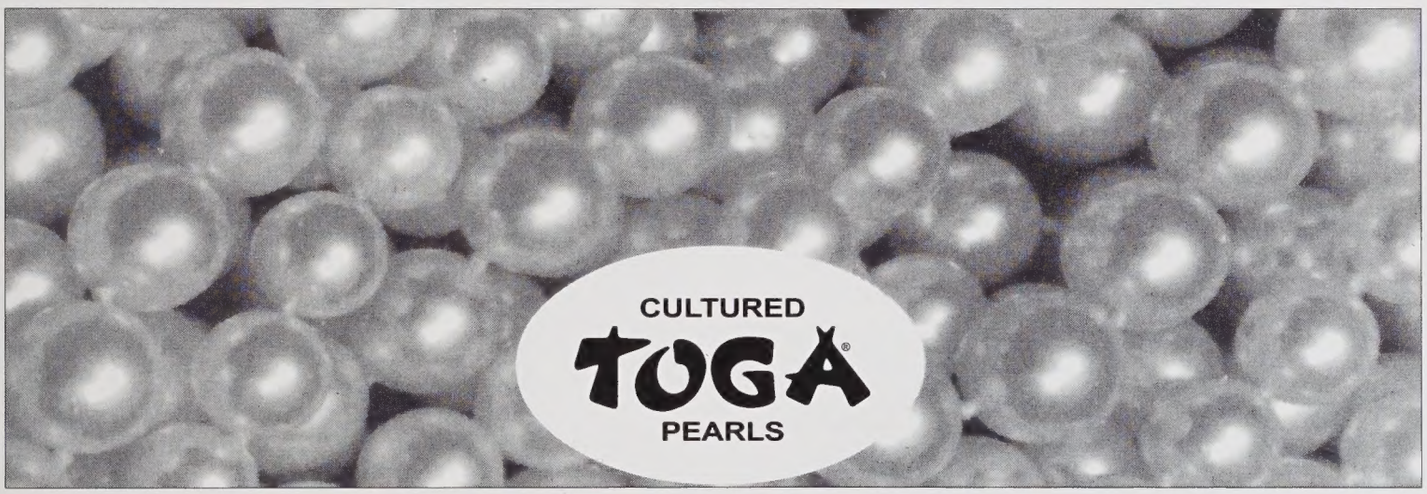

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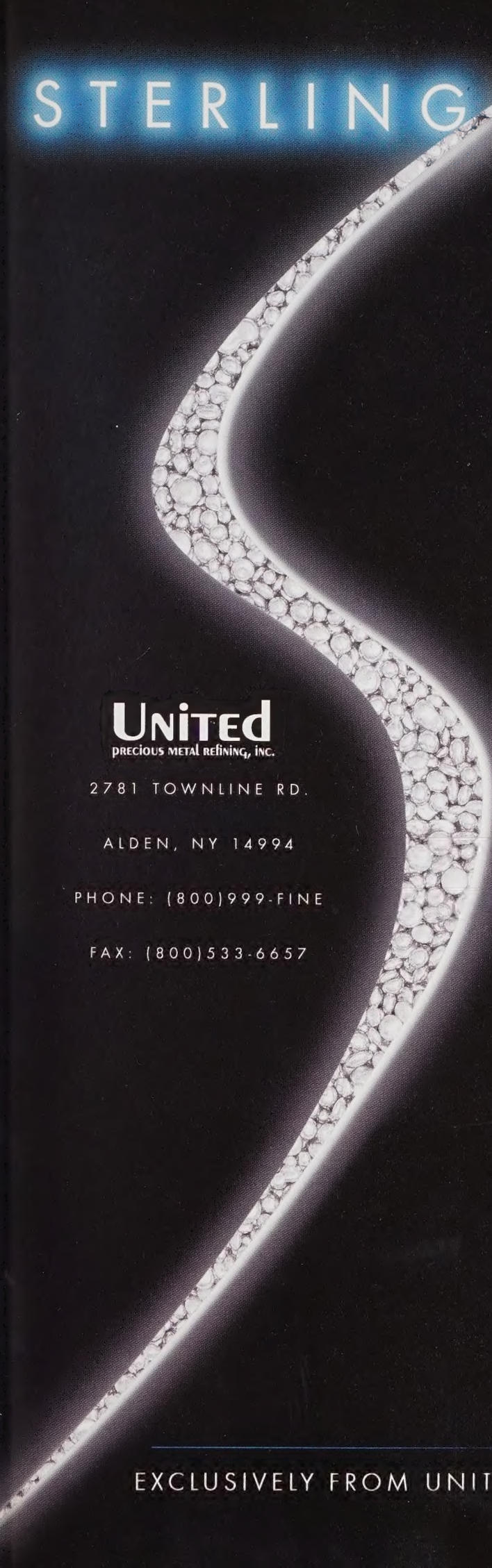

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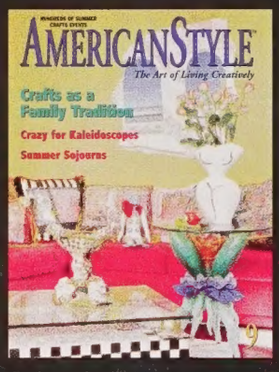

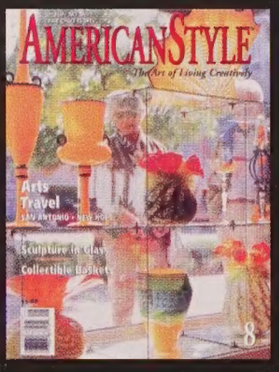

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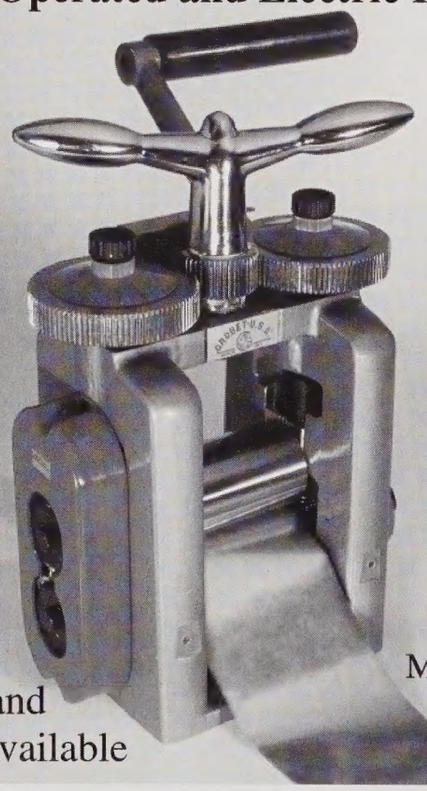

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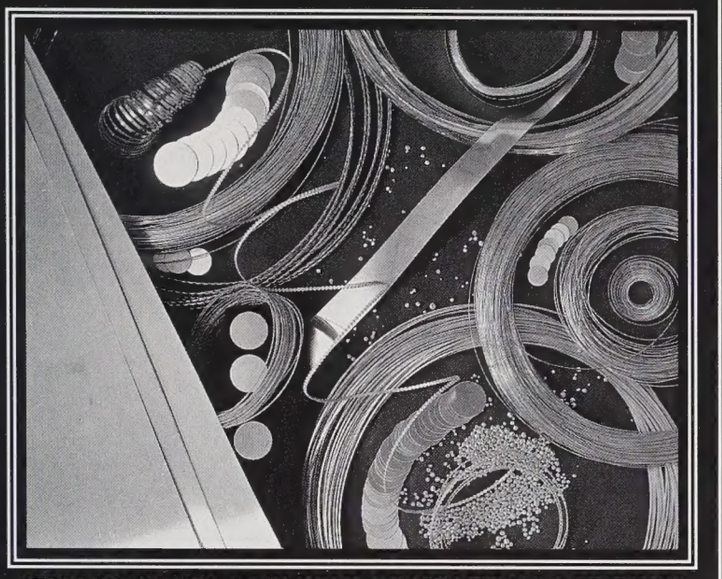

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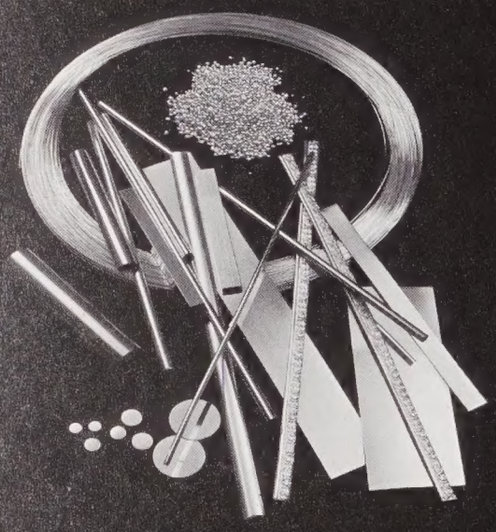

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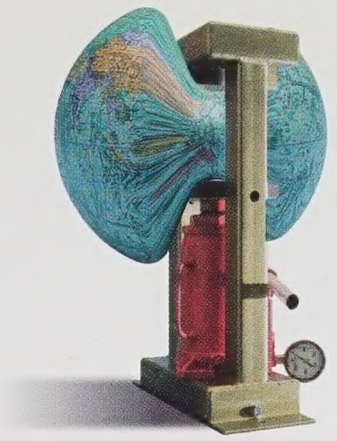

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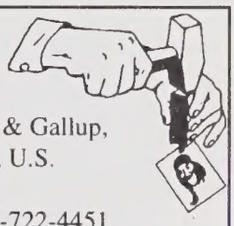

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- Seymour Rabinovitch, Seattle, WA: *"Silver Place-Flatware - Some History"*
- Toni Greenbaum, New York, NY: *"Aesthetics and Adornment in American Studio Jewelry 1940-1960"*
- Lane Coulter , Santa Fe, NM: *"Jewelry of the 1970's "*
- Otto Kunzli, Munich, Germany: *"Back on Stage"*
- Lori Talcott, Seattle, WA: *"Northern European Folk Jewelry"*
- Dawn Nakanishi, Redwood City, CA: *"Asian Roots, Western Soil: Visual Poetry in Metal"*
- Barbara Johns, Tacoma, WA: *"Designs on Jewelry"*

DEBATE TOPIC: *"It's Not Personal: or Is It?"*
Participants: Keith Lewis, Ellensberg, WA. & James Bennett, New Paltz, NY,
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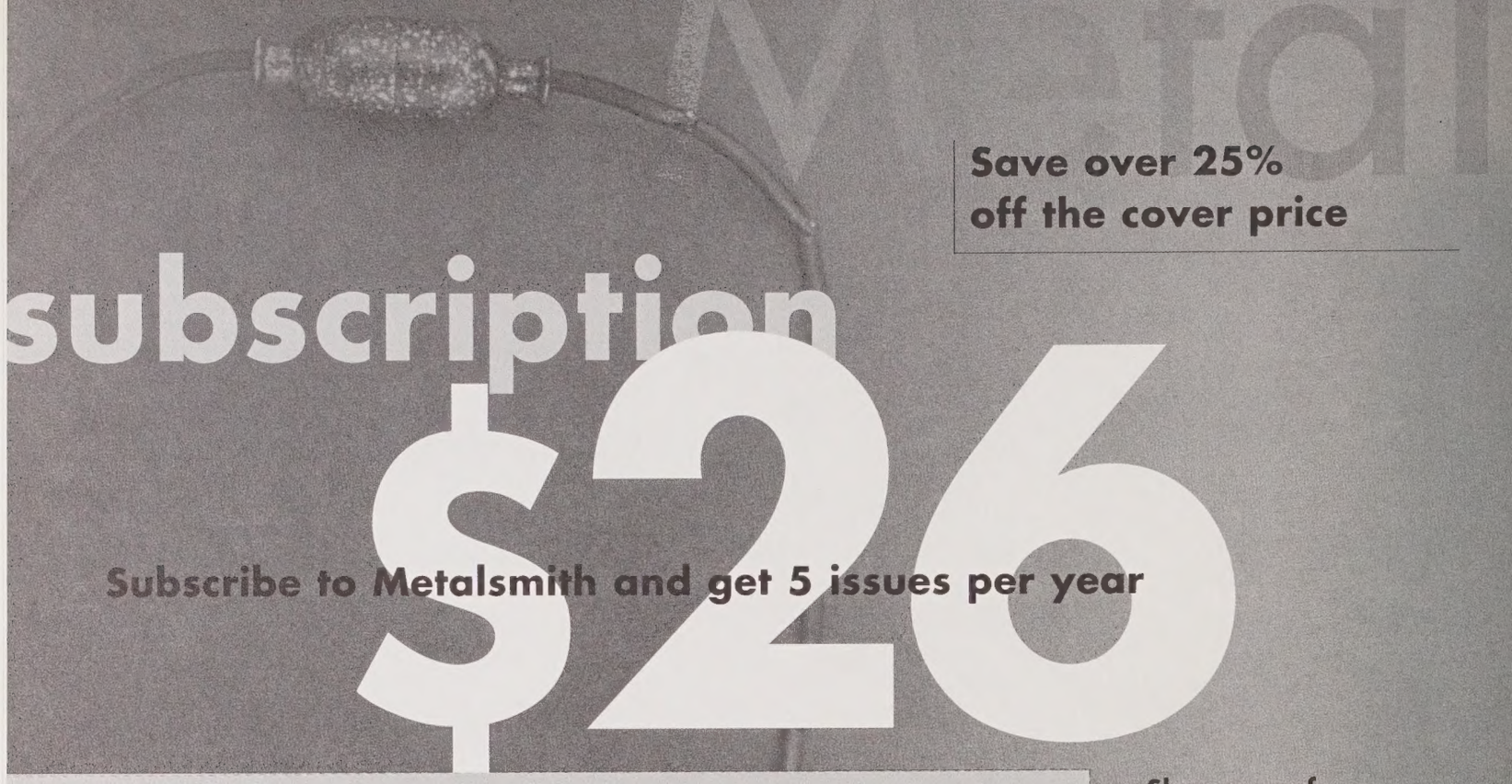

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Metalsmith 1998

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Metalsmith and SNAG, an Organization for Jewelers, Designers, and Metalsmiths, are soliciting slides of recent work of metalsmithing and jewelry to be juried for inclusion in the *1998 Metalsmith Exhibition in Print.* Approximately 40 artists will be selected for the publication which will include works reproduced entirely in four-color, artists' statements and biographical information and a critical essay, all presented with *Metalsmith's* traditional standards of quality and editorial excellence. *Exhibition in Print* will be published in Fall 1998.

Jewelers, designers and metalsmiths who are current members of SNAG, regardless of where they reside, are eligible and encouraged to apply. Student members of SNAG are also eligible. Artists featured in the 1996 juried *Exhibition in Print* are *not* eligible to enter the 1998 publication. All work must be original and produced within the last two years (1996 or later).

The entry fee, payable to SNAG in U.S. funds, is $20. To become a member of SNAG, please see entry form.

All slides submitted will be retained by *Metalsmith* and SNAG for archival, research and educational purposes, and as a resource for the editorial staff of *Metalsmith*.

The submission of a signed entry form will indicate your permission for *Metalsmith* and/or SNAG to retain, duplicate, and publish your slides, and your agreement to the terms and conditions set forth in this prospectus.

Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to apply with images that have not been widely circulated in *Metalsmith* or other publications.

The prospectus and entry form may be duplicated.

To obtain additional application forms or membership information, send SASE to:

1998 Exhibition in Print
SNAG Office
5009 Londonderry Drive,
Tampa, Florida 33647-9910

[see next page for more information]

Slide 1

Title

Object (i.e., teapot, bracelet, etc.)

Dimensions in inches: H W D

Materials

Date Photographer

Slide 2

Title

Object (i.e., teapot, bracelet, etc.)

Dimensions in inches: H W D

Materials

Date Photographer

Slide 3

Title

Object (i.e., teapot, bracelet, etc.)

Dimensions in inches: H W D

Materials

Date Photographer

Slide 4

Title

Object (i.e., teapot, bracelet, etc.)

Dimensions in inches: H W D

Materials

Date Photographer

Slide 5

Title

Object (i.e., teapot, bracelet, etc.)

Dimensions in inches: H W D

Materials

Date Photographer

It is suggested you keep a completed copy of this entry form for your records.

I grant *Metalsmith* and SNAG the right to retain, publish and duplicate any and all slides submitted herewith. I agree to all conditions of the prospectus.

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Rolling Mill Specialist
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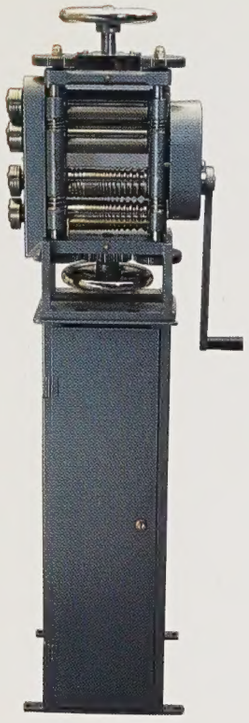
D2EX
120mm
With stand 128.115
Without stand 128.116



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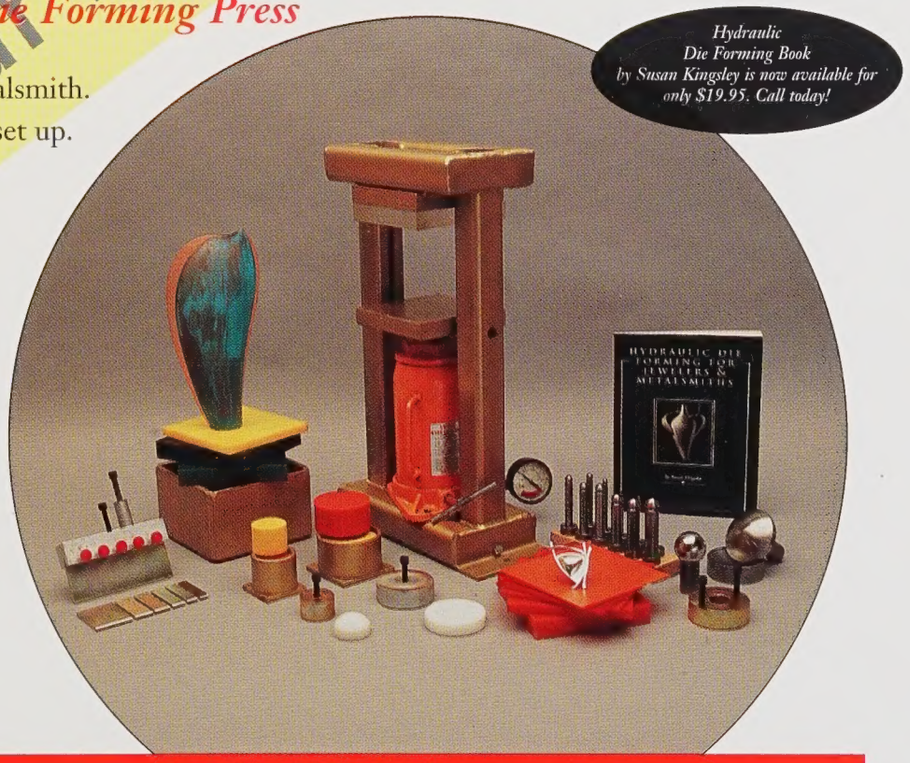

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